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FESTIVALS

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Mervyn Jones
The Case Against Phase III
Privacy, the Law and the Press
Peter Wilby on the Death of the Sixth Form
Household Faces 5: Robert Robinson
E. J. Mishan on Social Limits to Growth
Malcolm Bradbury: John Updike

The Exception That Bends The Rule

The Companies Act, 1976, comes into force this week. It provides that an investment amounting to more than 5 per cent of the shares of any company must be placed on public record, with the identity of the investor. But on 21 April the Department of Trade revealed, through a written answer to a parliamentary question, that an exception has been made. The rule will not apply to the Queen, to any other head of state, to the families of any head of state, to any government, or to any official body 'closely related' to a government. The shareholdings of these investors will be ascribed to a fictitious entity called 'Bank of England Nominees'. The Secretary of State for Trade will know which distinguished personage holds shares above the 5 per cent mark, and the company directors will know, but the public will not.

For several reasons, this is an unsavoury episode. To begin with the least important, though it is by no means negligible, exemptions should be debated when a Bill is before the House of Commons, not announced in written form when the Act is going into effect. What is central, however, is the principle that the law of the land should apply to all. Exceptions should be rare and scrupulously justified. None was stated without any supporting argument. Indeed, exemptions that confer privileges on the highly-placed – even on such an everyday matter as diplomatic immunity from parking fines – are justifiably resented. If the rule about disclosure of significant shareholdings is sound – and that was agreed on all sides – then its scope should be universal.

So far as the Queen is concerned, we commented on the secretary on the financial privileges she enjoys, and on the secretive manner in which they are exercised. Her wealth, though enormous, is veiled in mystery. She pays no income tax. Under a procedure of recent date, increases in her official salary are made automatically and without parliamentary scrutiny. And on top of all this, she is protected from any open discussion of her investments. Arguments in defence of the monarchy generally rely on its non-controversial character; it is an axiom that the monarch's conduct, in any sphere, should not be such as to offend any section of her subjects. But what if she is making money out of armaments, or riot-control gas, or asbestos, or the many processes which pollute the environment? Or, come to that, smoking beagles? In point of fact it appears that one large investment by 'Bank of England Nominees' is a stake in Barclays Bank, distinctly controversial because of its connection with South Africa. People who feel strongly about apartheid should have a right to know whether any of that money is the Queen's.

But when the exemption extends to all heads of state and their families, one sees that it covers hundreds or even thousands of persons. Numerous indeed are the progeny of the petty monarchs of Qatar, Abu Dhabi and states of that order. Discretion, of course, is a way of life with them; we hesitate to suggest that any of them wish to invest in distilleries or pork-sausage factories or porn publishers. Still, when we think of heads of state, governments, and those 'closely related' bodies, we have to think of Amin, Ghadafi, the Shah of Iran, Pinochet, the ferocious Argentinian junta – not to mention the communist states which are officially viewed as the standing menace to democracy. If any of them acquire significant holdings in British industries, British citizens – including potential investors in those industries – ought to know. A special danger arises if they buy their way into newspapers, television companies or publishing houses extensively enough to influence policy or exert a hidden censorship.

During the 1970s we have heard a great deal about 'freedom of information'. But Whitehall's resistance to this concept has taught us that only constant pressure can make it a reality. We have also learnt much about the unacceptable face of capitalism. Ample evidence has accrued that the condition for controlling its machinations is to know exactly how the power of money is being deployed, by whom, and to what ends. Evidently, the Labour Government still needs to be sharply reminded of both lessons.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Jonathan Aitken, At Home

Dear Diary, Imagine my delight and surprise at being invited to Jonathan Aitken's At Home. It's the first of these that I've been to, although Willy Waldegrave has told me about several others – where papers have been read by distinguished people like Hugh Trevor-Roper and Michael Oakeshott. The idea is that Right-thinking individuals from politics, business, academia and the press should all get together and have a good natter. Tonight's star speaker was F. A. Hayek, so you can imagine how excited I was! I spent the day preparing myself, boning up on Carl Menger and Leon Walras, and having another go at Ludwig von Mises's *The Anti-Capitalist Mentality*. By evening I was positively humming with anticipatory glee. I actually danced along Phillimore Gardens, and took the front door steps three at a time!

I was let in by a maid in a black dress and white apron. Hugh Fraser – gosh what eyebrows! – gave me a drink and took me over to meet Hayek himself, who was sitting in an enormous armchair, looking very old and frail. (I must say Lady Aitken has taste – I should think that all the furnishings in the room came from Harrods. I shouldn't be surprised if Jonathan Aitken himself came from Harrods as well.) Then I met Kenneth Baker and Leon Brittan *and* John Biffen – all in the space of two minutes! Willy Waldegrave, who has just got engaged, was talking to his boss, Sir Arnold Weinstock, and to Sir Marcus Sieff. My old tutor Maurice Cowling introduced me to Hugh Thomas; then I met Elie Kedourie, who never said a word all evening (he's a genius), Michael Oakeshott, Shirley and William Letwin, John Lucas and Roger Scruton. The press was represented by Alastair Burnet, William Rees-Mogg, Frank Johnson and Simon Jenkins. I was a little surprised to see Simon Jenkins there on such a night – but it just goes to show how much importance is attached to these occasions.

Well we were just warming up and getting to know each other when who should arrive but Margaret Thatcher! Fresh from Grimsby! (Oh dear, that sounds as if she's a consignment of fish.) Anyway, Hayek was so honoured that she had come that he stood up to meet her, and you could tell that she was very pleased and honoured to be in his presence. We all sat down where we could. Hayek was almost lost in his armchair. He read a paper about the concept of social justice, which I thought very good. He points out that social justice is a mirage. Social justice is a legacy from primitive society – apparently there are still tribes in Africa where the notion is considered fundamental. You hunt together, and there has to be a sharing out of the spoils. That's social justice. But in a modern society you have to choose between freedom and social justice. If you want social justice, it has to be imposed by a tyranny – that's what Hayek says. If you want freedom, you can't have social justice. That's why social justice is a mirage.

Well, after he'd read his paper we all went next door for a buffet supper – I think it was a *boeuf stroganoff*, with rice, and I had a glass of red wine. Then we went back and had a discussion. We divided up into liberals and conservatives, the liberals being the ones who really believe in the free market economy and everything that Hayek says, and the conservatives being the ones who had their doubts about the whole thing, and thought that perhaps there was something to social justice. Michael Oakeshott was waspish, mischievous and brilliant – gosh – and Maurice Cowling was pretty sceptical. Sir Marcus Sieff said that the free market economy would not work unless there was *some* sense of 'social responsibility': for instance, he said that you couldn't close down factories just because they were unprofitable – because workers in your other factories might go on strike. So you'd have to phase your redundancies. But Margaret Thatcher pointed out that in such a case the group – taken as a *whole* – went on being profitable; in other words, there was no basic disagreement between Hayek's and Sieff's lines. Hayek said Thatcher was right. Weinstock seemed to agree with Sieff however, that there had to be some 'social responsibility'. Sometimes, honestly, I begin to despair of our big businessmen.

John Lucas, who comes from Oxford, I think, expressed the opinion that there was some residual instinct for social justice in society. I think he thought of it as a kind of left-over, primitive feature (perhaps like the incest taboo). I suppose he's a classicist of some sort. He also said that not everything in society can be governed by the laws of the market economy, and he gave the rather telling example of the Queen's job – you couldn't just advertise for a Queen, he said. Hugh Thomas was also quite philosophical on this point. He said that while freedom was *desirable* (of course) a lot of people in, for instance, France and Italy are not in favour of it. They prefer, he suggested, social justice and repression. This suggested to him that the urge for freedom was not universal. I thought this perhaps the best point made in the whole evening.

I couldn't help watching William Rees-Mogg, as he lounged in his armchair, tenting his fingers and bouncing the tips against each other. He broke in to ask why so many governments had recently interfered with the free market – if the free market was such a good thing. Alastair Burnet also came in on this one, and said that the free market economy had lost a lot of support in recent years, particularly in the inter-war period. Hayek came back and said that the American Depression was not the fault of capitalism, but had been brought about because credit policy was wrong. This gave Thatcher a chance to say, addressing herself to Rees-Mogg and Burnet, that the free market economy was gaining support now because the alternative had been *tried* and had *failed*.

So – what do I make of Thatcher? is she really a liberal – I mean a real, sound, anti-collectivist, anti-corporatist, anti-inflationist Hayekian stalwart? Or is she just a conservative? One thing that bothered me, in the informal chat afterwards, was a point she made about Clydeside. 'It's so difficult,' she said, 'isn't it, when a *whole community* is dependent on *one* industry, just to let the thing go to the wall.' I must say I was rather appalled by this lack of firmness of purpose. And yet it was clear from the way she had spoken the rest of the evening that she is a deep believer in freedom and a sworn enemy of social justice.

The point is important because we Conservatives are in grave danger of taking ourselves at the Left's evaluation. The Left say that Margaret Thatcher is the most right-wing leader the Tories have had in years – but they say that about all our leaders. Is she really right-wing enough? Is she really monetarist enough? John Biffen says that Labour has alwa monetarist than the Tories, present Government is n seems rather sceptical about of a future Tory administra see his point. The trouble office, with all our good i tions, and then we get blo We suffer a failure of ne comes along, like the bankr Royce, and we just forget al These little sessions at Jona able in that they remind stand for, and how much i they show too how, even an the instinct for freedom has enfeebled, how the chime social justice still haunts so most thinkers. Our busine ruthless enough, our philos ern enough, our politicians single-minded. Nor is the Co really on our side. I poin Simon Jenkins on the way o don't you make the *Even* proper platform for Hay The look he gave me only of my worst suspicions.

(Extract from the Diari Cosgrove to be publish

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Mervyn Jones

Free for All, and Why Not?

From the point of view of capitalism, the function of a Labour government is to persuade the working class to make sacrifices in a docile and loyal manner. A Tory government, though more congenial to capitalists in other respects, is ill-equipped to achieve this. The thought isn't always admitted to consciousness, but there are times when it becomes explicit. At present it's widely recognised, to the chagrin of Tory politicians, that heavyweight opinion in the City and industry favours Mr Callaghan's continuance in office. True, the workers are deserting the Labour Party in by-elections; that just shows how prone they are to do the wrong thing.

British capitalism, more than that of any other major nation, has always sought to resolve its difficulties by reducing labour costs. In the 1920s, when it first became evident that the old workshop of the world was in trouble, the solution was rather brutally expressed in the maxim: 'the wages of all workers must come down.' After the second world war had weakened Britain yet more grievously than the first, a Labour government took on the task of implementing what was now called 'wage restraint', in which the TUC acquiesced at the bidding of the solemnly minatory Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stafford Cripps. Then, under Tory rule from 1951 to 1964, for various reasons – the illusions of the 'age of affluence', the working-class bargaining power created by full employment and indeed labour shortages, and the government's wish to avoid conflict – real wages were allowed to rise substantially. From 1964 to 1970 the Labour government enforced restraint ('incomes policy') with fair success; from 1970 to 1974 the Tory government proved itself unable to do so save at the cost of ruinous confrontation. Labour returned and wage restraint soon returned too, under the modish aegis of 'the social contract'. In 1977 this is becoming difficult to sustain, for a simple reason. For the first time since the early 1920s – or, according to some historians, since the depression of the 1880s – the working class is suffering an actual reduction in living standards.

Whether all this restraint has done Britain any good – and I'm writing, for the moment at least, within the respectable framework of 'the national interest' – is a question seldom asked but well worth asking. The reduction of labour costs has been adopted, deliberately or through laziness, as an alternative to investing in re-equipment and improving productive efficiency. When muscles are cheaper than machines, the seeker after profit isn't impelled to go in for the latter. To put the matter at its most basic, men and women in the Third World carry sacks on their heads because they are cheaper than lorries. At the other extreme, the economy of the United States has been developed on a foundation of high wages; there have been and are notorious exceptions, and strenuous trade union pressure has been necessary, but the generalisation holds good. Although in certain respects Britain need not envy the American social system, we should decidedly be better off if we could look back on a century of industrial expansion on the American pattern and match American productivity levels today. A still more striking example is that of Japan. Before 1939, some British industries were supposed to be menaced by Japanese competition based on starvation wages. It was believed that if Japanese employers could be made to pay properly, everything would be all right. Nowadays the Japanese workers do have wages equal to those of British workers, and often better. And we are reeling under Japanese compe-

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tition, not merely in textiles and gimcrack toys as in the old days, but in steel, shipbuilding, car manufacture and sophisticated electronics as well.

Since I am a socialist, I also have the experience of the Soviet Union and the East European countries much in mind. (I regard the USSR as a socialist country which has gone wrong; those who think otherwise can skip this bit, or I'll argue with them another time.) Under Stalin, the Soviet regime opted for rigorously controlled wages, set at levels which prescribed a harshly penurious standard of living. This sufficed for the creation of an industrial infrastructure in the period of the early Five Year Plans, but it has held back further advances. Essentially the policy has not been revised by Stalin's successors, so that the Soviet economy is still characterised by low productivity, a great wastage of manual labour, and shortages of the simplest consumer goods.

I am saying, in fact, that free collective bargaining and determined – militant, if you like – pressure for higher wages are of positive benefit, both in securing a better life for the workers under capitalism and in bringing the promises of socialism to fruition. But at this point I must meet an argument vigorously advanced by those Labour leaders who still employ a socialist vocabulary, notably by Michael Foot. It is that socialists believe in planning and in social control of economic processes, so that it would be illogical to exempt wages – a major factor in any economic equation – from planning and control.

Popular Initiative

It's evident, however, that there are social ends best attained by popular or indeed individual initiative rather than by control. Mr Foot would be the first to agree that a flowering of the arts would be a manifestation of a good society, but I don't think he would suggest a central plan to regulate the output of sculptures or poems. Again, in an advanced and complex economy like ours, the service sector is of great importance in its effect on everyday life, and also bulks heavily in the use of resources and in spending; but nobody, I trust, is urging control of the numbers and distribution of dry-cleaners, garages, electrical repair shops or hamburger bars. Yet again, the use of labour is a most significant factor in the economy. Concern is justifiably expressed over its lack of mobility, and harmful shortages occur even in times of high unemployment on a nation-wide scale. (For instance, there are not enough building workers in Aberdeen.) But do we want a system of direction of labour, which in the name of planning would transfer building workers from London to Aberdeen whether they want to go or not? Let Mr Foot, with all his command of socialist rhetoric, try to put that across to the TUC.

In all these spheres, the state can rightly guide, urge and supply resources. It makes grants through the Arts Council, it makes low-interest loans to small enterprises where they are socially desirable, and it pays the moving expenses of certain groups of workers. But it ought not to issue orders. The socialist critique of capitalism has always been that it makes freedom a reality only for a minority who can afford choice, and not for the mass of the people; and, despite all the changes that have been brought about by democratic pressure, this charge remains valid. The socialist aim is to make freedom a reality for all. If this ideal is parodied when free collective bargaining is derided as a 'free for all', we should not be daunted. For freedom to make demands over the conditions on which men and women work – primarily, wages and hours – is among the most central of all freedoms.

Let me revert to the warning example of the Soviet bloc. Briefly and somewhat patchily, in the first years after the Russian revolution, industries were managed by elected committees of workers and trade unions had a voice in setting wage levels. Both management and wage determination soon passed into the hands of an appointed, hierarchical elite. Trade unions east of the Elbe are now, at best, welfare bodies concerned with canteens and holiday rosters; at worst, disciplinary organisations helping to enforce the rhythm of work. In effect, there are no trade unions in the proper meaning of the term. But the suppression of the free trade unions was the first and crucial stage in the loss of civic freedom. It was soon possible to punish workers for lateness or for mistakes which may not have been their fault, to demote them arbitrarily from skilled to unskilled work, to jail them for 'indiscipline' or 'grumbling'. The tyranny of the state in every sphere followed inexorably. What we often forget is what it followed *from*. For every dissident intellectual consigned to a labour camp for circulating an illegal pamphlet, an unknown number of workers have suffered for voicing the demands that in Britain are the everyday content of arguments between shop stewards and managers.

Class-Divided Britain

But among the other reasons why free collective bargaining should be cherished, we should remember that it is the only countervailing force against social inequality. As to that, again, the Soviet example is eloquent. However, in Britain we are not yet living under socialism. Capitalism generates inequality as the lubricant of its structure; in class-divided Britain especially, the assumptions of privilege remain potent. Though fortified by all kinds of subtleties (the 'staff' toilet, the carpeted floor) they depend essentially on money. It is instructive to ask the man in the saloon bar, when he fulminates against the insistence by toolroom workers on their differentials, whether he thinks that the sales manager should be paid more than the deputy sales manager – let alone the toolroom worker. He takes it for granted, of course.

The current pay code, notably in its original 1975 version, was accepted by the unions largely because it represented a move toward equality. The enthusiasm was most emphatic, naturally enough, on the part of unions like the Transport and General Workers which cater for lower-paid workers. The better-paid, who cherish their differentials, were less inclined to cheer; and the obvious fact is that the system has come unstuck because skilled workers are not permanently content to earn barely more than the unskilled. But this, true enough on the face of it, hides a deeper reality. A real social contract had to mean a movement toward equality, not merely within the working-class but throughout the social structure. Foot saw this when, in his first ministerial speech in March 1974, he proposed a review of 'all these questions of the relations between unearned incomes and others, between the protections which some have and others do not, and the rest'. More pithily, he declared: 'Nothing can be more absurd than the spectacle of a few fat men exhorting all the thin ones to tighten their belts.' Of course, if the Labour Government had pursued these intentions . . . But then, if your aunt had a beard she'd be your uncle.

Scooping the Pool

At the Labour Party's last conference before it gained office in 1974, Denis Healey accepted proposals for improving the conditions of many impecunious citizens – rentpayers and pensioners, especially – and warned that these must be paid for by increased taxes in the middle brackets. Taxation, in 'consensus' theory, is the corrective to inequality of incomes. Anyone earning over £4,000 a year, he said, must expect to be mulcted; at present money values, this would be about £6,000. Personally I know a fair number of people making that kind of money, and at no time since 1974 have I noticed their inability to order large whiskies or call taxis. Men and women (mostly men) in this bracket have been bewailing their lot ever since Gladstone imposed income tax at sixpence in the pound, and since 1945 they have been telling us in emotional tones that the workers have displaced them as the privileged class, although something else I haven't noticed is any rush on their part to volunteer as miners or bricklayers.

Mr Healey has now responded to their plaints and decided that the sector where the need for relief is greatest is in the managerial echelons of industry. His 1977 tax concessions are designed to reward Britain's executives for their brilliant work (which has won us a superbly diminishing share in export markets) and persuade them not to take jobs abroad (if, in view of their record, they were likely to be offered any). The £6,000-a-year men will benefit, the £16,000-a-year men will benefit more, and those with really fancy earnings will benefit most of all. I suppose it's mainly for prestige that Sir Rowland Wright of ICI gets himself paid £93,508 – what *does* he do with the odd eight quid? – and Mr 'Tiny' Rowland of Lonrho gets £70,400. Their real wealth, of course, isn't measured by their stated earnings but by the consequent opportunities for investment and capital gains.

Thus did the forthright, courageous Healey strike his blow for democratic socialism and lay the groundwork for agreement on yet another year of wage restraint. Having done so, he appeared last weekend at the conference of the shop and warehouse workers, well known for their weekend homes and champagne suppers, to declare: 'If one group uses its muscles to scoop the pool, the rest will be left with nothing.' One quite sees that the last thing he wants is a

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free for all. Nor do Sir Rowland Wright and Mr Rowland – only a free for them.

In the early days of this Government – bliss was it in that dawn to be alive – postures of social equality were splendidly struck. Along with the much-touted schemes for a wealth tax, such ideas have been quietly interred. What remains is 'the good old rule, the simple plan' – I am again quoting another reconstructed radical, Wordsworth – 'that they should take who have the power, And they should keep who can.' Wage restraint, in fact.

Inflation, steadily undermining the value of wages at present levels, is as bad as ever and has not been overcome by the sacrifices made by the working-class over the past two years. Unemployment, weakening the bargaining power of workers in most industries, is as bad as ever too. We face the prospect of a Tory Government which, although indeed it might find itself incapable of maintaining good order and discipline, would be markedly hostile to working-class aspirations and interests. Should anyone be astonished that the trade unions are minded to regain their only defence against adversity – free collective bargaining?

Jeremy Bugler

The Great Oil Blow-Out

Among other unpleasant things, what Ekofisk *Bravo* Well No 14 is likely to have done by spewing oil and gas into the North Sea is to lay bare how much we are in the hands of government-by-disaster and how the scale of modern disasters is growing. For Ekofisk *Bravo* is a wild well that at one blow-out has rid the offshore oil industry and the governments that promote it of their pretensions to competence and technical mastery in the North Sea fields. The *Bravo* well shows that the oil companies have not the competence for the work they are doing.

It is no comfort at all, as Tony Benn was telling the Commons this week, that perfect mastery is impossible and 'however good the precautions, high technology is susceptible to the same difficulties as all normal human activities'. For we are stuck into the North Sea, with some 60 platforms in the British sector alone. The Ekofisk disaster, bearing in mind that each platform has several wells each capable of blowing out, suggests that the exploitation of the North Sea may well be seen, retrospectively, to have been conducted with the subtlety of American strip-mining and the control of the dust-bowl farmers.

If that seems an extreme statement, consider this: the oil companies and the governments (this was not just a Norwegian disaster) knew long ago that such a blow-out was likely, did virtually nothing except get a couple of ancient fire-fighting ships to hang about, collected a little detergent, then crossed their cheques and hoped it wouldn't happen. They *knew* it was likely from their earlier experience of onshore and offshore drilling, but they were also specifically told of the probability in a government report, *Pollution Paper No 8*, in 1975. The paper was the work of the Central Unit on Environmental Pollution, a watch-dog a little drugged by its civil servant handlers.

Late in 1975 the Unit did studies of the probalities of a blow-out, based on a formula developed by M.I.T. which assumes that the number of accidents is directly proportional to the amount of oil at risk. The studies, which took in the Ekofisk field, suggest a rate of blow-out of one for every 455 wells drilled. The Unit suggested there was a 50 per cent probability of more than one blow-out by the end of 1980.

How much notice was taken of *Pollution Paper No 8* published last spring, and the warnings of ecologists and some oilmen, is shown by the fact that only in the last month has the Government, in the shape of Tony Benn, got round to going to Norway to set up a working party for cooperation in a North Sea emergency. This is almost precisely eight years after Phillips Petroleum struck oil with a wildcat well in the Cod-field area. Since the Ekofisk disaster a week ago, Benn has only been able to cite a series of meetings and joint committees as evidence of action, as if the word was the same as the deed. There's a glaring shortage of safety hardware about.

Benn's principle of making the oil companies responsible for their mishaps and accidents is right enough; if the government had the job of controlling blow-outs and spills, the North Sea might already be the sterile, plankton-less, bird-less, fish-less water some ecologists say it will become. But the Government can't escape charges of doing little to force the oil companies to higher production standards and more safeguards.

The mild-mannered Unit, for example, set out recommendations many of which have not even been agreed between government and oil industry, let alone acted upon. It asked the oil companies, among other things, to ensure that 'a dedicated and adequately equipped anti-pollution standby vessel is permanently on station at each group of platforms, and on hand during critical stages of exploration'. This proposal is resisted by the UK Offshore Operators' Association, who say it would be a wasteful use of resources to keep a special vessel hanging about. The same association, representing the oil companies in the North Sea, turned down Red Adair's proposals, made over three and a half years ago, that the North Sea operation needed specially designed semi-submersible vessels for fire-fighting and pollution control. Too expensive, said the Association, arguing that multi-purpose vessels were better value. Thus BP adapted an old tanker, renamed it the *Forties Kiwi*, for fire-fighting; its captain said this week: 'We are not specifically trained firefighters.'

A firm of shipbrokers, Eggar Forrester, trying to assess the future need for North Sea services, commented recently: 'In general, the oil companies have gone for fast development at the expense of planned maintenance.' This way of proceding – development first, safety afterwards – allowed Red Adair to predict so confidently three weeks ago: 'Whatever precautions are taken, there'll be a disaster in the North Sea sooner or later . . . There are no proper facilities for coping with it . . . At the moment for a real blow-out, you don't have anything.' He added he'd been to Britain several times and talked to people about the need for North Sea safety equipment and was largely ignored: 'Everything's sitting out there, wide open, with nothing to protect it.'

Britain and Norway perhaps resemble, a little, two forestry commissions, who have planted enormous forests, seen them grow and start to produce timber. A forest fire has shown them to have built no fire-breaks, to have no fire-fighters of their own – just a few racks of brooms. Britain's own chances of a sensible, paced exploitation of its resources probably went once the oil was conceived as a way of pole-vaulting out of a grey economic decline. The Government departments whether Energy, Trade or Industry, have each simply looked on the North Sea problem as one of yield and speed. The Department of Trade, for instance, published a report on North Sea oil in which one paragraph was devoted to pollution.

How then can this disaster be turned to a little good effect? Ideally, after a cock-up of this magnitude so early in the North Sea production programme, all platforms should be shut down while the Norwegian Government carries out the public inquiry it has promised and the inquiry's findings are acted upon. Given that this won't happen – because of the economic trauma it would bring about – the affair of Ekofisk *Bravo* at least calls for a wholesale overhaul of production standards, a lot of spending on safety equipment, and a governmental change of mind to look on energy conservation in the way that President Carter has learnt to do.

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Raymond Wacks*

Privacy and the Press

Who is this killjoy Mr Bore? Why does he wish to dampen the spirit of candour and fun with which we are treated to the real truth about our elected representatives and their opprobrious affairs? Because, says Albert Bore, agent for Labour MP Tom Litterick, it may prejudice the MP's convalescence from a recent heart attack. While Fleet Street would toil singlemindedly in the cause of truth, Mr Bore objects.

So do I. And not (though I have nothing but sympathy for the MP and trust his return to rude health will be swift) because of his infirmity, but simply because I fail to see what relevance his extra-marital indiscretions have to his job as a Member of Parliament. Public person or no, there must remain a realm of private life that does not warrant the glare of publicity, if only because of its total irrelevance. Nor, therefore, can I accept that there was any justification for gratuitously disclosing the identity of the MP's alleged mistress. It is surely intolerable that by mere association with a public figure people may have their private lives assailed with callousness and impunity. Only *The Times* boycotted the story entirely – thereby maintaining the anonymity of the 'other woman' in Litterick's life. It would be nice to believe that this represented a stand of principle, but it is more likely to have been a self-denying ordinance imposed by embarrassment – for the other woman concerned just happened to be an employee of *The Times* newspaper.

Meanwhile the *News of the World* was on a different tack. Cheapest of the Sundays (still only 10p) it has this week republished the generous outpourings by the ex-wife of yet another MP, Brian Walden, which she had pseudonymously provided to the sex magazine *Forum*. It seems that while her husband sat long into the night legislating, his spouse was forging alliances with his parliamentary colleagues – between crimson sheets. If Mr Walden, an old campaigner for a statute on privacy, turned a shade not unlike those bedclothes, it was not because he questioned the truth of the accounts. Indeed, the truth of none of the disclosures described above have been doubted by their victims. It is precisely because of their veracity that that they wound. And for some the arrow is doubly poisoned: Chris Hutchins, erstwhile confidant and PR man to the Family (singers Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck and Gilbert O'Sullivan, and their manager Gordon Mills) has been busy blowing the gaff to the *Daily Mirror* on what were the private confidences of colleagues and friends. In addition to invading their privacy, he has breached their confidence.

Yet the Court of Appeal ruled last week that the *Daily Mirror* should not be enjoined from serialising his revelations. The stars, said Lord Denning, had courted publicity; they could not complain if their ex-employee 'was persuaded that there was another side to that image, for it was in the public interest that it should be made known'.

But was it? I believe not. The law has long protected the confidential relationship between employer and employee, permitting it to be broken only in exceptional circumstances, such as where the employer has committed some illegal act and his public-spirited employee discloses his perfidy to the appropriate authority. Despite this, the court held that the confidence between pop-star and confederate may justifiably be breached. The public has a right to know the truth about Tom Jones, boils and all.

This is a lamentably insensitive assessment. Even the otiose, toothless watchdog of free speech, the Press Council, would I believe have condemned the disclosures as an invasion of privacy which could not claim to be in the public interest. In its 'Declaration on Privacy' issued last year the council recognised that there must be 'a legitimate and proper public interest and not only a prurient or morbid curiosity'.

But it must be remembered that since the law makes no explicit provision for the safeguarding of privacy, the plaintiffs brought their claim for an injunction on the ground that Hutchins (and the *Mirror*) were guilty of a breach of confidence. It was this remedy that the Younger Committee on Privacy in 1972 (after rejecting the need to extend legal protection to public disclosures of private facts) described as affording 'much greater protection of privacy than is generally realised'. The Committee was wrong. The action, which is more suited to protecting trade secrets than privacy, is unlikely to assist in preventing or redressing many incursions into private lives. Indeed, it is hard to imagine practical circumstances more exactly representative of the kind of invasions which Younger envisaged as being adequately covered by the action for breach of confidence. Yet it did not help Messrs Jones & Co.

'I've no objection to sanctions against Uganda. We've done very nicely with the Rhodesian ones.'

It's Hobson's Choice. Those who find their intimate secrets breakfast fare for the multitudes may either go to law or to the Press Council. The former course necessitates forcing the case into one of the accepted legal pigeonholes. To the extent that the disclosures are lies, the law of libel normally furnishes a remedy. But invasions of privacy by definition involve the truth, frequently more injurious and less easily assuaged than falsehood. The only other viable remedy is the action for breach of confidence. But naturally the existence of a confidential relationship which has been broken is a *sine qua non*. Notwithstanding the breach of confidence, the Court of Appeal last week was willing to allow disclosure because (according to the Master of the Rolls) 'the public interest was that the truth should out' – a proposition which may excuse a breach of confidence, but which is the death knell to any right of privacy. Indeed, it seems, with respect, as if the Court of Appeal has confused the two interests. Its indignant reproof to publicity seekers (those who court publicity forfeit their claim to privacy) is a harsh statement that relates to the broad question of privacy; what relevance does it have in a case on breach of confidence?

The other course is no more rewarding. The Press Council is not only powerless to stop publication; it cannot even award compensation to the complainant. Its sole sanction is to request the deviant editor to publish its adjudication. And it is the Press Council that Fleet Street (and the Younger Committee) propose as the alternative to the legislative regulation against which it has so resolutely set its face. But it is no alternative. Its judgments – terse, often unreasoned and conflicting – offer little guidance to either editor or individual on the legitimate bounds of press disclosures. Genuflecting to the concept of personal privacy, it merely seeks to avoid statutory recognition of the right of privacy believing (wrongly) that any such legislation would emasculate press freedom.

For it is only the law that can attempt to reconcile the competing claims of the right to know and the freedom from unwanted publicity. It is obviously difficult to draw a line, but it is surely spurious to contend (as the Press Council and Younger have done) that such difficulty ought to cause us to abandon the enterprise altogether. The law already strikes a balance of a very similar kind in libel cases; and if defending the concept of privacy were the intractable problem the press allege it to be, how may one explain the apparent facility with which the Press Council proclaims its opinion and delivers its judgments on the subject?

Muckracking, trivial gossip, particularly

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when it violates private lives, cannot be justified under the banner of press freedom. What public interest, save morbid curiosity, is served by hurtful exposures of facts an individual wishes to keep to himself? No one wishes to dragoon the press into operating under excessive legal restraint. But the onus is on the press to show why a balanced statute safeguarding the citizen's privacy while preserving the right to know remains something in Britain that we can never hope to have.

John Hatch

Mr Manley's Experiment

How do you build a socialist society in an island of 2 million inhabitants, dependent on producing bauxite, sugar and bananas for foreigners, relying on imports for most of what they eat, wear or use? This is the task which Michael Manley of Jamaica has to face. Not only is he a socialist by conviction, but he has won two elections over the past four months on a straight socialist platform (in December, nearly 57 per cent of the Jamaican voters gave Manley's People's National Party 47 of the 60 parliamentary seats; and, in March, over 67 per cent gave it 237 out of 269 local councillors).

In Jamaica socialism means land redistribution, workers' co-operatives, government responsibility for jobs, houses, schools, the people's control of the country's wealth. Even if such measures eventually result in higher productivity, the initial steps to secure such goals involve government expenditure. Yet Jamaican governments, like those of Britain, have been spending more than they receive – and they do not control vast foreign reserves as collateral.

So Manley's election victories brought added burdens. He and his party gained power in 1972. They had been desperately unlucky from their second year in office. First the increase in oil prices quadrupled their petroleum bill, for Jamaica depends on oil for 92 per cent of her energy. Then the world recession hit the tourist trade, which provides foreign exchange, and reduced the demand for bauxite. Partly through the recession and partly from political prejudice foreign investment, which had always bridged the gap between the trade deficit and a balance of payments equilibrium, almost dried up.

Nevertheless, from 1974 onward, Manley and his colleagues had begun to build Jamaican socialism. Land redistribution was initiated through offering new farm land on 49-year leases to 24,000 new farmers. Co-operatives were established on sugar estates and in other productive areas. Education, especially in adult literacy was expanded. The Government began to establish new jobs through its own agencies.

This was the programme which Manley and his party were commanded by the electorate to continue and expand. How could they obey? If they went to the IMF for a loan to replenish the foreign reserves needed for imports they would be told to reverse their social policies. All the world trends seemed against socialist hopes. The price of sugar had fallen from £650 a long ton to £120 in a year. Bauxite demand was down, tourism had declined by 20 per cent within two years. Bananas had ceased to be export earners. Inflation was imported from the escalating prices of machines and manufactures.

Manley's first answer to the conundrum came in January. He increased taxation on those with incomes of over J$22,000 a year (nearly half the Jamaican labour force earns under J$1,000); stiffened import and foreign exchange controls; nationalised the cement company to encourage community house building; froze wages and prices; and reduced all ministerial and parliamentary salaries. He promised the nation an emergency production plan by April and a full five-year plan by the end of the year.

Last week the 1977 production plan was announced by the Prime Minister. His emphasis was on a drastic increase in the island's own production. The land-lease scheme is to be immediately expanded to provide land for 10,000 new farmers. The object is to restrict food imports to J$70m. this year in contrast to the J$200m. spent in 1976. More co-operatives are to be established, especially on farming projects, though large farms will remain in private ownership provided that they are productively farmed and provide for worker participation. A new effort is also to be made to restore the ailing tourist industry. This will be organised within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a new exchange rate favourable to visitors will cheapen the cost of a Jamaican holiday.

During the parliamentary election the Opposition Jamaica Labour Party made great play of its assertion that the Government would have to devalue the Jamaican dollar by 40 per cent. This was obviously believed to be the price which would have to be paid for an IMF loan. The JLP clearly hoped to frighten the electorate by publicising the consequent price rises.

In his new plan Manley has ingeniously circumvented this fear. There are to be two rates of exchange for the Jamaican dollar. The present rate of 0.90 cents to the US dollar will remain for 70 per cent of imported foods – those mainly bought by the poor. It will also be used for staple exports, most of which are controlled by the government. But for luxury imports the dollar will be devalued, so increasing their cost. This devaluation, to J$1.25, should both encourage tourism and the development of Jamaican manufactured exports.

The ideology behind this plan and the whole PNP strategy is that of self-reliant democratic socialism, enunciated most clearly by President Nyerere of Tanzania, a firm friend of Manley. The focal issue is whether Jamaicans are capable of the kind of national mobilisation on which such a policy depends. Nyerere himself has always found this his chief handicap and Jamaican tradition is less disciplined than that of Africa.

The island has a powerful elite – far larger and stronger than that of Tanzania or any other black African state. Some of them have left, others illegally export currency; they dominate industry, its civil service and professions. The Opposition has declared a policy of passive resistance – under the law – which bodes ill for the export opportunities provided under the new plan or for increased local production.

To be successful, Manley will certainly need as much commitment to local production as was forthcoming at the polls during the elections. He also needs financial aid to supply essential imports until local production shows results. The IMF may be impressed by his efforts, especially as the Carter Administration is more friendly; or other progressive governments may be prepared to help. This is an innovative experiment in democratic socialism in a stereotyped Third World state; its fate will affect many ex-colonial peoples far from the Caribbean.

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Household Faces-5 Robert Robinson

The Monitor

Conjecturing about what telly personalities are like off-screen is not a game all viewers enjoy playing. When a newspaper spotlights a revered star *in flagrante*, or cheating on the underground, or just being a bit snotty to photographers, most properly disciplined fans of the accused end up resenting the low conduct of the tabloid. Why can't they leave him alone? is the familiar cry; we loved him just the way he seemed to be. This is not, of course, the sophisticate's approach. For him, it is axiomatic that behind the manufactured image lurks an interesting, nasty mess. Hard thinkers invariably 'know for sure' that the idol in question is a drunk, wig-wearing pederast who simply *never* beats his wife. From their different angles, though, the last notion to be tolerated by either side is that there should be a consistency between what the chap is like in private and what he's like when he is sucking up to millions.

A sound enough line of suspicion, on the whole, for very few television performers are allowed to do what Robert Robinson *has done*: make a career out of appearing to despise, on-screen, the whole business of being on the screen. It's not easy to puncture the image of a man who perpetually looks as if he too wishes we weren't watching him; as if he, just like us, has far more lofty, pressing matters to attend to. The air of wishing to be somewhere else, or at best of having far more to offer than the vulgar medium allows him time for, has stood Robinson in good stead over the years. Like Gilbert Harding, whom he knew quite well, Robinson is licensed to be grumpily contemptuous of his telly role; that's to say, being grumpily contemptuous is one of the roles telly pays him to perform. He can comfortably masquerade as the champion of literacy, the custodian of correct usage and firm syntax; the more trifling and inimical the context, the more heroically conservative his efforts will appear. The faint suggestion always is that if telly allows chaps like me aboard it can't be quite as bad as chaps like me keep saying.

The difference, Robinson would contend, between Harding and himself is that Gilbert really did loathe being on the box; he genuinely felt himself demeaned by having to earn his guineas in this trashy way. Robinson may feel similarly superior to much of his material, but doesn't at all mind – indeed, rather enjoys – having that superiority registered by millions. You don't have six radio and TV shows running at the same time unless, deep down, you're yearning for a seventh. For Robinson, one feels, it's rather like being the cleverest boy in the most comprehensive classroom you could find; or, better still, being the most colourful teacher in the largest of all schools. Much of his success comes from reminding people of some schoolmaster they once loved and feared – he of the acid tongue and churlishly paternal manner. He'll do all right by you, old Robby, provided you keep on your toes, but the one thing he can't abide is slacking. By placing himself in a quasi-pedagogic role in shows like *Ask the Family, Brain of Britain* and the like, Robinson can always make sure he's nursing the last word. Knowing all the answers, he can afford to smile or frown upon a mass audience of fallible examinees. Love him or hate him, most viewers would give a lot to be told that they'd impressed him.

Appropriately, Robinson describes his own schooldays as 'Arcadian'. Born in Liverpool in 1927, he was mainly brought up in the London suburbs and the school he went to – Raynes Park Grammar School – was in the Thirties something of an oddity. The headmaster was John Garrett, a minor literary presence now remembered for once having co-edited an anthology with Auden. Garrett made a point of getting his famous chums down for the day; Auden, indeed, was persuaded to write the school song and T. S. Eliot handed out the prizes. Rex Warner taught English there and L. A. G. Strong was on the board of governors. Garrett himself Robinson remembers as 'a terrible show off and a raving snob. But I'm on my knees to him; he taught me that there was a horizon beyond the by-pass.' For Robinson, the horizon was always going to be Fleet Street; he'd wanted to be a journalist since, at the age of six, someone had praised him for the elegance of his junior prose style. At Oxford, he edited *Isis*, tried acting (only to be discouraged by a tart review by Alan Brien), admired Nevill Coghill, and met his future wife. Oxford, like school, he looks back on with disconcertingly uncomplicated nostalgia.

Robinson's steady, contented progress to the Street was interrupted by a steady, contented two years of National Service in Africa. In 1952, he joined the *Sunday Chronicle*, and became their TV columnist – not a common species of hack in those days. The job, though, brought contacts within broadcasting and during the newspaper strike of 1955 Robinson was given his first job on the box – as television's first television reviewer. Thus, from the start

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he was given permission to curl his lip at most of what went on around him. His journalistic career for ten years or so jogged on alongside his telly appearances on shows like *Picture Parade* and *Points of View*. He was at various times film/theatre columnist for the *Sunday Graphic*, radio critic for the *Sunday Times* (he also edited Atticus for a bit) and film critic for the *Sunday Telegraph*. But it was *Points of View* that made him famous. This five-minute slot in which viewers' letters were read out and replied to was the perfect vehicle for Robinson's schoolmasterly disdain. All he had to do was read out some dotty screed, squirt a good-humoured jet of acid, and then move on to the next ink-stained, ill-lettered offering from Disgusted Minor of the Lower Third. As always, Robinson preserved a careful balance between amusement and contempt, and would also make sure that from time to time there were sombre commendations and reproofs. Decency, level-headedness and commonsense were the criteria, and it is fair to say that whenever Robinson *has* been tetchy or intrusive in one or the other of his various talk-shows, these have tended to be the criteria at issue.

The manner Robinson perfected in the days of *Points of View* (and other now forgotten shows of the period like *Do You Remember*? and *The Fifties*) came under its fiercest scrutiny when in 1971 he took over the *Today* slot on radio from 'cosy' Jack de Manio. '*Why Must You Sneer At Us All*?' ran a typical headline, and the reviews were pretty much along these lines. 'Baldy Robinson is a long hair', 'Robinson is pompous, arrogant and unpleasant'. It was gleefully reported that Ian Trethowan, on hearing Robinson's first efforts on *Today*, had exclaimed: 'I never thought I'd live to regret the passing of Jack de Manio.' Robinson remained unruffled. Criticised by Robin Douglas-Home, who said he was a 'bald, middle-aged, smirking kill-joy', he produced the perfect all-purpose riposte: 'It is rather like being savaged by a bloodthirsty rabbit.' Engagingly, Robinson's main grumble about *Today* was that it meant getting up at 4.30 in the morning ('I said to myself – if you turn it down just because you don't want to get up early, you're a cissy and I won't shave you in the morning') and after three years of watching himself turn into an insomniac he gave it up. After that *The Book Programme* and his radio show *Stop the Week – et al.* Two years ago, someone worked out that Robinson was earning around £25,000 a year.

The Book Programme has given Robinson the novelist (he has published two averagely stylish crime yarns) the chance to make it clear that he believes some people to be more gifted than himself. Indeed, he is almost excessively humbled by the thought of 'great writers'. Mention Nabokov or Patrick White and our sardonic compère will soften into naked hero-worship; an odd spectacle, but heartening – it tends to bear out Robinson's careful down-playing of his telly-fame. 'Anyone, well, almost anyone, can do it,' he claims, pulling on the hat he used to confuse the fans. 'All right then, but why *you*?' He stares back, as if you ought at least to know the answer to *that* one. 'Not enough of the breast early on, not enough of the breast.'

Christopher Hitchens

Mourning Star

Every year in March, a bizarre old couple in Ipswich club together and place an advertisement on the small-ads page of the *Morning Star*. It commemorates the death of Joseph Stalin, who in the Fawcetts' opinion was the man who saved the world from fascism and laid the firm foundations of the new society in Russia. This year, the little black box of homage was there as usual. Except that, after the conventional inscription came the line: 'It suits today the weak and base . . .'

Now, all who know their *Red Flag* know that one of its less-sung verses begins like that and goes on:

> Whose eyes are fixed on pelf and place
> To cringe before the rich man's frown
> And haul the sacred emblem down.

Phil Piratin, one of the Communist Party's two MPs in 1945, once wrote a book called *Our Flag Stays Red*, which closes with the verse in question. The elderly venerators of the great tyrant were thus adding their mite to a debate currently raging among British Communists about whether or not they should desert their old and cherished certainties.

The *Morning Star*'s small-ads column these days is full of barbed and coded messages. You can tell the Stalinists because they are always putting in tributes to Luis Corvalan, the leader of the Chilean Communists who was the first man in Latin America to support the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The other day, at the Congress of the Young Communist League, they put up a motion congratulating the Soviet Union on securing his release from a fascist jail. Considering that he was swapped for a Russian political prisoner (it had been in the papers) the delegates rejected the motion by two-to-one, and for good measure, lowered the maximum age for YCL membership to exclude some of the ageing Stalinists from overlong stays among the corruptible youth. Other issues at a rather ragged conference were hard-line objections to any communist concern with such matters as women's liberation, rock music, 'sex and the rest of it' as one disgusted comrade put it.

The Euro-communist wind has been blowing with particular force through the British Party. The *Morning Star*'s immediate response to the Czech government's squalid persecution of Charter 77 dissenters was an unequivocal condemnation on the front page. They took a similar position on the expulsion of Wolf Biermann from East Germany, and on the prosecution of rioters in Poland. A feature of all these statements has been the relative absence of qualification of the kind that marred their criticism of the 1968 invasion. A draft issue of the CP's programme, 'The British Road to Socialism', is now being circulated and outdoes even Berlinguer in its commitment to political pluralism, civil liberty and the separation of powers. It is this document, due to be voted on at the Congress in November, that the old-line shellbacks are determined to defeat. They advertise their meetings in the paper under the rubric of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. The man who gives most of the speeches is Fergus Nicholson, former student organiser of the party, who recently led a picket of an Amnesty International meeting on Russian prisoners. The placards read 'Amnesty = CIA' and 'Anti Sovietism is a threat to world peace'. Most of the pickets were from Turkey, where the illegal Communist Party clings to a Moscow line through thin and thin.

The Russians have in the past sponsored pro-Moscow breakaway parties in the West. After the Czech atrocity of 1968, they did so in the case of the Spanish Communists, the Australians, the Greeks and the Austrians. They might be contemplating doing so again, though it will be very difficult to find many recruits these days, and their attempt to bully the Spanish party led them into ignominious failure and the withdrawal of Russian help from the Stalinist rump. The prestige of Corvalan may help them, of course, but in the British CP it is probably too late. The *Star*'s daily column devoted to reader's contributions on the draft programme is running heavily in favour of the leadership, with only the occasional burst of anger about the absurdity of 'using the bourgeoisie to crush the bourgeoisie'.

Those who share in uncritical acclaim of the USSR are chiefly concentrated in the Surrey District of the party, where matters turn on the talents of one Sid French, a full-time party worker since his demob. He thinks that the whole revision of party strategy is a mistake; that it is an unpardonable insult to criticise Moscow, that the entire enterprise is a foolish attempt to appease liberal bourgeois public opinion. Every year since the invasion of Prague, French and his blokes have striven to erase the 'stain' from the party's record on the question. This year, they will try again, and try to stop the collapse into soft-line politics in Britain as well. They will fail, and they may have to go if they do.

Euro-communism may be none of the things claimed for it by its adherents, but as the miniature British version shows, it does have a real existence and it is bitterly distrusted by Russia and her friends. The party is still riddled with Stalinist assumptions – even the severest criticisms are couched as if they were addressed to a state whose fundamental basis is unobjectionable. But there is now very little danger of the splendid spirit of D. N. Pritt having an enduring say. He was once accused by Tom Driberg of being a gullible old thing when it came to the Moscow line. His reply was: 'That's quite unfair. I've often criticised the Russians. It's just that I've always afterwards discovered that they were right and I was wrong.'

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Peter Wilby

Death of the Sixth Form

The sixth form, the apex of the academic secondary school and the glory of the selective system, has entered its terminal phase. Since the beginning of this year, ministers and officials at the Department of Education and Science have been serving notice that the country can no longer afford a proliferation of small comprehensive school sixth forms.

The idea that every secondary school should have its own sixth form is a hangover from the days when it was believed that comprehensive education for all meant grammar school education for all. The minimum workable size for a sixth form, according to the DES, is 140 pupils, with at least 100 of them studying for A levels. Yet 40 per cent of comprehensive sixth forms have fewer than 50 pupils. The use of resources is, therefore, both wasteful and inequitable. The average staffing ratio of one teacher to ten students in sixth forms is better than many university departments enjoy. No less than 60 per cent of all 16-plus classes have ten pupils or fewer. Small classes in the sixth form mean larger classes for younger children. The sixth formers get the kind of pupil-teacher ratio that 15-year-olds with maths and English difficulties ought to have.

But the sixth formers pay a price, too. Small sixth forms mean a limited range of subjects on offer. A 17-year-old taking A level French, for example, will almost certainly be in a small class – probably just three or four students. But he may be taking French only because his school could not offer Russian or Spanish or German. Less than 10 per cent of Inner London's comprehensives can offer even three modern languages at A level.

The solution is to concentrate the A level courses in separate sixth form colleges. There are already 72 such institutions up and down the country, notably in Hampshire and Cleveland, and 17 more are planned. Better still are the tertiary colleges, combining sixth form and technical college courses in a single institution.

The pre-selection lobby, always anxious to shoot down an idea that might improve the comprehensive system, will now discover that it has great concern for the spiritual welfare and morale of secondary school teachers. These teachers, it will argue, will be depressed if they have no prospect of sixth form teaching, no opportunity to see their young charges flower into intellectual maturity.

Curiously, the same lobby was not greatly concerned when the majority of the secondary teaching profession – working in secondary modern schools – was deprived even of O level work, never mind A level work. And even in the comprehensives a teacher will think himself lucky if he gets a few periods with the sixth form. The privilege is not spread evenly, it is usually hogged by the more senior staff.

Far from being the ruin of comprehensive schools, the removal of sixth forms could be their making. Sixth forms are redolent with the traditions of the grammar and independent sector. They are the point where the elitist, academic *mores* of the universities connect with secondary education, where the university Godhead is made flesh in the people's schools. Induction into university education occurs not at 18, but at 16. Sir Harold Wilson, the only member of his school sixth form, recalled that it was a good preparation for Oxford tutorials.

The deplorably restrictive and distorting influences of the universities on secondary education – over-specialisation, the downgrading of practical skills, the glorification of academic achievement – emanate very largely from the sixth form's role as an academic Trojan horse. The schools are concerned to develop and sift out academic sixth form potential. They measure their successes by numbers of A level passes and university entrants. The 16-year-old school leavers are associated with failure; they have failed to qualify for sixth form work or the school has failed to inculcate academic habits or the teachers have failed to persuade them to stay on. Instead of ascending to the heights of A level history or literature, the leavers are going to take up engineering apprenticeships and produce things or enrol at the local technical college and learn welding. Their names will not be recorded on plaques in the assembly hall.

Without their sixth forms, the comprehensive schools might begin to develop a curriculum in which academic achievement was not the overriding aspiration. Unable any longer to measure success in terms of university entrance, they might begin to think of the skills and knowledge that a 16-year-old (whether he is to be a university student or a craft apprentice) ought to have acquired at the end of compulsory schooling. What is actually learnt in secondary school might become important. The trouble with the present system is that it operates almost entirely, not even as a preparation for higher education, but merely as a mechanism for rationing access to it.

The DES has no power to impose sixth form colleges on the whole country, nor would it wish to do so. But it has some instruments through which, in many areas, it can come as near to imposing its will as makes no difference. First, it has the power to reject new schemes for comprehensive reorganisation. This year, Shirley Williams has already turned down plans for comprehensive schools, embracing traditional sixth forms, in Derbyshire and in Walsall. Second, it has the power to withhold approval for building plans. Third, the Department can start to change the system of teachers' pay and promotion so that it is no longer related to sixth form size.

A fourth expedient – introducing more conformity between the regulations governing schools and those governing technical colleges – could assist the brightest prospect of all: the tertiary college. This new animal takes the ideals of comprehensive education (people with different talents doing different things side-by-side in the same institution) a stage further. It can provide a more eclectic education, with A level students able to take, say, vehicle maintenance as a general studies option. It can help to bridge the division between academic and vocational studies that has bedevilled English education for 100 years. And it can combine the best of the very different traditions of the sixth form and the technical college – the care for the individual and the communal spirit of one, alongside the adult atmosphere (no insistence on nine to four attendance, no rules about dress) and the practical, down-to-earth orientation of the other.

The results of one of the most impressive tertiary colleges, serving the Lancashire cotton towns of Nelson and Colne, should allay fears about academic standards and incentives to continue education: 50 per cent of the local youngsters (in an area of predominantly working-class owner occupiers, with a significant Asian population) take full-time courses after 16 and the A level pass rates are generally above the national average, impressively so in the sciences. The staff say that many students, who would automatically have taken A level courses in the traditional system, have opted for more practical and vocational diploma courses at the college.

Even where there is no sixth form or tertiary college, young people have been voting with their feet against the old-style school sixth form. A fifth of those who take full-time A level courses are now in further education colleges, and these provide 16 per cent of all university entrants. Some years ago, a survey of A level college students showed that dislike of school was at least as important a reason for attending the 'tech' as availability of subjects. The college's attraction, concluded the researcher, was precisely its weakness in the eyes of the academic traditionalists – 'there is no tradition, no established value system, no demands for loyalty and conformity.'

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London Diary

☐ Twenty years ago when I first started in the journalistic trade there were still at least six cities in Britain with competing evening newspapers. Very soon there will be none. Not that any of us can claim to have been ambushed by the forward march of monopoly. Way back in the early 1950s even such normally unemotional bodies as P.E.P. and the Fabian Society were delivering grave warnings about the trend towards concentration of ownership in the British press. It was, everyone agreed, a 'disturbing' tendency – but not, it appeared, one that could be stopped. Politicians of all parties may proudly pledge their allegiance to the 'mixed economy'; yet the one area where no dilution at all of the principles of capitalism is permitted remains, curiously enough, the press. There market forces are allowed to operate in a way to gladden the heart of even Sir Keith Joseph. And not merely newspaper market forces either – if that were the case, it would hardly be the *Evening Standard* that was being bartered. No, the dismal moral to be drawn from the London evening newspaper merger is that the press in Britain is now no more than an appendage of big business. For years Lord Beaverbrook was assailed for having candidly admitted to the first Royal Commission on the Press that he ran his newspapers 'purely for propaganda and with no other purpose'. But was that really so very wicked a thing to say? It certainly seems to me a rather worthier motive than running, or rather getting rid of, newspapers in order to make a killing in the property market or on the Stock Exchange.

☐ No one (not even John Cousins) could have been totally surprised when Moss Evans and the union machine came up trumps in the TGWU election. So we may as well get used to Evans's name; he is secure for the next 14 years after all – that is, unless a movement starts quickly in the union's GEC and among the defeated candidates to push for changes in the electoral rulebook. Relevant motions are already down for the union conference at the Isle of Man in July. Some of the union hierarchy is known to be disappointed by the 39 per cent turn-out (virtually the same proportion as for the last such election in 1968). It means over 1 million could not be bothered during the four weeks of polling. The wide regional fluctuations are also bewildering the leadership. All in all, internal democracy may turn out to be Evans's first big test.

☐ There's a hotel in Jerusalem called 'The American Colony' – which has always struck me as a slightly tactless name, not least for Israel. But I'm beginning to think that a daughter hostelry with the same title in London – sited, say, somewhere near Shepherd's Bush or Fleet Street – would be even nearer the bone. Our role as a cultural dependency of the United States seems suddenly to have become complete. Not that I object to *Roots* or to the ubiquitous President Carter (though the *Sunday Times* ought to have more interesting things to publish than warmed-up *Time* eulogies of him). All that, however, I can take – or leave – as the case may be. What I couldn't take was last week's benefit match for Spiro Agnew. He was a wooden figure of minimal interest when I first set eyes on him a decade ago at the famous press conference in Miami Beach when everyone with one accord asked 'Spiro who?'. We now, I suppose, do know rather more about him, though I find it hard to think that any of it is much to his advantage. In fact, according to Elliot Richardson, he should have gone to prison. Perhaps, though, we ought to be thankful that he didn't. A Vice-President who'd actually been in the slammer – in its present mood the BBC would no doubt have booked him for an entire TV series.

☐ When Tony Crosland died nearly three months ago, one of the Ministers of State at the Foreign Office, Ted Rowlands, was stuck in South America trying to repair our relations with the Argentine. When he came back, he discovered that his colleague as Minister of State, David Owen, had already been installed as Foreign Secretary – but I'm sure he took that philosophically as merely part of the luck of the draw. What, though, Mr Rowlands is entitled to feel not quite so philosophic about is the announcement the other day of oil discoveries in the South Atlantic around the Falkland Islands; they're said to dwarf even the North Sea fields into insignificance – which from the FO's point of view is hardly convenient. For the Falkland Islands, or rather the strange desire of the 2,000 or so inhabitants there to retain their British connection, remain the principal cause of friction in our relations with the Argentine. The FO can't stand anomalies – or as they probably call them 'anachronisms' – and it's no secret that Mr Rowlands's mission was intended to start the process of our getting shot of the poor unfortunate Falklanders and handing them over into the eager but not altogether congenial hands of the present authoritarian Argentinian regime. I see the talks are about to start again – this time, I imagine, with Mr Rowlands protesting Britain's undying historic commitment to the islanders.

☐ How very typical of an education authority to sack six employees for 'indiscipline'. Throughout the William Tyndale affair there was a curious difference between what the chief participants perceived as the main issue and what the rest of us thought it was all about. While they were concerned about who controlled the school (teachers, governors, inspectors or education authority) we wanted to know whether the children were being taught properly. Naturally, the two issues are connected. But the distinction is surely important. The six Tyndale teachers have been sacked (subject to appeal) for going on strike rather than obey orders to cooperate with a school inspection. So what if they had agreed to the inspection? And what if they had listened politely to the results, made a few token adjustments to their teaching methods and then carried on in much the same way? Is it unduly cynical to surmise that we would have heard no more of the matter? Mr Ellis, the former head, has spouted a great deal of nonsense throughout this affair but one can't help sympathising with him when he says: 'You can be as inefficient as you like as long as you don't go on strike.' Inefficiency, in this case, was only worth demotion.

☐ By the time of his death Geoffrey Bing had become one of the forgotten figures of politics. Yet in the early 1950s he played a crucial role, operating as the Bevanite 'whip' and proving himself a master parliamentary tactician. Many on the Left found it hard to forgive him his flirtation with authoritarianism in Nkrumah's Ghana, and it was strange that he himself never understood the offence that his repressive behaviour there caused. The last time I saw him, he told me he had just been back to Ghana – adding (in reference to his eventual imprisonment there) 'this time as a government guest . . . a voluntary one'. He was always, I think, a little hurt that when Labour, and many of his old Bevanite comrades, got into office in 1964 no effort at all was made to make use of his own undoubted abilities. He used to boast that he was the grandson of a Chinese pirate, and perhaps the trouble was that it never somehow seemed wholly implausible.

☐ I was interested in Peter Jenkins's story about the 'think tank's' proposed abolition of the Foreign Office in the *Guardian* on Monday, but it was the small print that primarily intrigued me – in particular his description of Kate Mortimer of the 'think tank' staff as an 'exceedingly clever young woman'. So clever, I'm told, that she had the previous evening won £100 from the *Guardian*'s political columnist at poker. So much for all the chauvinist rubbish I've been hearing and reading about the game lately.

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Police were searching Eastbourne last night for a middle-aged woman who stabbed Big Bruno Elrington, a heavyweight wrestler, who was thrown out of the ring by his opponent. Big Bruno, who is 6ft and 16 stone and comes from Portsmouth, landed among the ringside seats and the woman thrust a knitting needle into his back before fleeing the hall. Mr Elrington went to hospital for a tetanus injection – *The Times* (Mrs A. A. Mackrell)

☐ 'It was still tolerable after the war, even if the character'd gone. But now the streets are full of undesirables. I was even taught last year how to sniff at these Arabs and say "hatha haram" or something if they accosted me. It's from the Koran and I'm happy to pass it on.' – *Daily Telegraph* (Brenda Rowe)

☐ Radio and TV personality Lady Isobel Barnett told Crewe Conservative Women's Luncheon Club last week that interviewing Sir Winston Churchill and then having the opportunity to sit in his chair while it was still 'hot' was one of her most wonderful experiences. – *Crewe Chronicle* (Valerie Warren)

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University Forum

Jonathan Sleigh*

Civil Service Selection

If I had to pick on a single anecdote, from ten years of working in the place, to characterise what I think is wrong with Whitehall, this one might do. I was working with a more senior colleague in the cabinet office on a report to the cabinet on the current state of play in ministerial discussions on the lump. I made a point of some substance that was not reflected in the draft we were mulling over, and suggested where it might be inserted. My colleague considered the suggestion sympathetically, but in the end decided against it on the grounds that its insertion would spoil the flow of his sentence. The last I heard of him was that he was the undersecretary in charge of road safety. Well, obviously. It's not a subject for someone who doesn't know how to use a semi-colon.

But down at the Civil Service Selection Board radical influences are at work. One of the biggest single tests in the selection process is a thing called the 'appreciation'. This is a fattish file of papers bearing upon a single problem from a variety of angles – for instance which, out of four possible sites, to choose for a power station. When I did the tests in 1966 there was hardly a figure in sight. When I went back as a part-time board member in 1970 the influence of Fulton was already in evidence. The appreciation included cash flow figures – already discounted to net present values, mind you – as well as the more important considerations like the proximity of motorways, and possible hazards to the habitat of the dotterel. If a candidate succeeded in spotting most of the pros and cons of each site, and writing an elegant and reasonable recommendation, you didn't mind too much if he made a hash of the figures. If, however, he didn't write very well, the new standing orders enjoined you to see whether he had done anything specially clever with the figures. This might represent evidence that he was a scientist rather than just the ordinary kind of dimwit.

There is probably quite a lot to be said for the proposition that articulacy in writing and in speech points to a reasonably wide range of useful intellectual attributes; and if that is what Whitehall is primarily after, then there is no doubt that the Civil Service Selection Board does a highly professional job in finding suitable candidates.

Take another key test at the Selection Board – the 'committee exercise'. Here the candidate has a specific problem, usually related to the appreciation, and 15 minutes to explain it to the committee, suggest a possible approach, seek the views of his (usually) four colleagues, and sum up. It is tough, and can only be done well by someone who is pretty intelligent. But other qualities than intelligence are also fairly obviously relevant. Smoothness helps; and so (with only 15 minutes at your disposal) does a ready ability to abandon the solution you first advocated in favour of one that seems more likely to achieve a consensus. The point is that it can also be done atrociously by someone who is very intelligent, and particularly if he either has convictions about his initial suggestion, or – and this is a common case – happens to find it difficult at the drop of a hat to pretend to an expertise that he knows he does not possess.

Certainly anyone who did not take kindly to pontificating about matters on which he was not qualified to write a letter to the *Daily Mirror* would find life in Whitehall a little difficult. The rule tends to be that the more they think of you the faster they move you about. In my first Principal post I worked in the central finance branch of the Air Force Department. My boss was a delightful man who used to lock himself in his office and open a very good bottle of claret at 1 o'clock prompt every day. He made no secret of his loathing for this particular job, and was pleased when he was asked to head a small cabinet office unit on environmental pollution. This was fairly near the beginning of the pollution craze; and the new unit was the British Government's first effort in the field. The next time I saw him – a mere few weeks later – was on the television news. He was 'Britain's expert', off to talk to the Americans about their dumping of surplus chemical agents in the Caribbean. So far as the cameras were concerned he looked every inch an expert, and probably reassured many people. How he went down with the Americans I didn't hear.

Candidates go through the Civil Service Selection Board usually in groups of five, each group being watched, monitored and marked by its own group of three assessors: the 'chairman' (a senior, or a retired senior civil servant); the 'psychologist' (a psychologist); and the 'observer' (usually a serving Principal). The essence of the system, as I saw it, is that the performance of the candidates in the tests and exercises gives the assessors a much better basis on which to conduct individual unstructured interviews than is normally available for that kind of interview; and this is powerfully reinforced by the periodic conferences held by the assessors in order to compare notes and swap impressions. For instance, it is a common enough experience in conducting an interview to feel that, through lack of concentration, you have let a candidate off the hook. Confess it to your fellow assessors, and they will be delighted to get him right back on it again and see what he does.

Of course the Selection Board is looking for more than verbal skills and plausibility in handling unfamiliar material. The bulky 'notes for assessors', or 'Bible' as it is inevitably called, abounds with phrases like 'the well-rounded individual'. Words like 'urbane', 'detached', and 'sophisticated' spring to mind as descriptive of the sorts of qualities that go down well with the Board. Words like 'committed', 'inquiring', 'concerned', and 'original', on the other hand, do not. With the undergraduate and just graduated candidates I often had the feeling that what we were really looking for was the prematurely mature. When, in my own department, I heard young Principals in their late twenties drawling with a cynicism that was no longer even affected, and showing signs of real animation only on subjects such as pension entitlement, I began to realise that the Board was only too successful.

In short, the ideal Whitehall type is a sort of unpassionate barrister. He can't afford to be too passionate, even if he had the inclination, because judge and jury of both his performance and his career development are people just like himself who would find a more flamboyant performance a little distasteful. He is not expected to be an originator; his job is to master his briefs as quickly as possible, and to deal with new subject matter with elegance, and within the spirit of an inherited body of departmental wisdom. He is, however, expected to be convincing; and the more he convinces the better he does.

The Civil Service Selection Board is rather proud of the fact that its results are a good pointer to subsequent performance in Whitehall. I find the circularity of this correlation rather disturbing, even leaving aside the fact that the better you pass, the better the jobs you tend to be given (and the more influential the contacts you tend to make). It may be that the type who does well at the Selection Board is also the type who *could* be trained as a competent government administrator in a medium sized industrial power; but since no attempt has ever been made to find out, the case is unproven. Training of young administrators still consists of little more than a goodish grounding in theoretical economics with no other end in view, as far as I can see, than to impart or reinforce a deep suspicion of expertise.

I eschew comment on the public school and Oxbridge bias in the selection of administrators: that theme has been well enough worked over by others. What intrigues me more is the possibility that the Civil Service selects and advances according to a peculiarly British sort of ideal. The potency of the ideal may run far wider than Whitehall itself, though of course Whitehall powerfully reinforces it. Harold Macmillan once summed it up perfectly when he said that he saw Britain's role as to play Athens to the Americans' Rome. The Whitehall of the administrators is very like a Greek city state. On the whole the citizens would much prefer it if the slaves pulled their fingers out and worked as hard as they used to; but they can find reasonable consolation in the fascinating dialogues they have with each other as to why this doesn't seem to happen.

**Jonathan Sleigh joined the Civil Service in 1966, having been at Nottingham University. He left Whitehall last year.*

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Mother O'Mine

I wonder whether anybody has recently been sparing any sort of sympathetic and friendly thought for Goethe's mother. She seems to be so terribly out of things these days though it is true that she did leave us rather a long time ago, in 1808. I ask, because in this year's elaborate jollifications over the anniversary of Beethoven's death (and I fail, incidentally, to grasp the special magic of the figure 150), Frau Beethoven, the only reputable Frau in his life, for he never married, has come in for what some might consider more than her rightful allowance of attention. After decades of neglect, she suddenly became the Mother of the Year. Flowers were strewn on her grave, grateful prayers were offered up for her in churches and her name was on almost everybody's lips.

Goethe's 150th comes up in five years' time, in 1982. Can't we make it a real rouser too for dear old Mrs Goethe? After all, she did achieve a certain kind of immortality, for two reasons. Firstly, as I suppose we must think of it, she produced one of the world's most renowned writers and *penseurs* and she herself can hardly be blamed for the fact that her son's clever pen carried with it more than its fair share of annihilating ennui (if you don't believe me, rattle through *Faust Part II* in the original and see how you get on). And secondly, she got herself unwittingly into numerous anthologies of famous Last Words. Invited to tea by friends unaware of how seriously ill she was, she sent a polite message back declining and adding that she was 'busy dying'. I do not know what Frau Beethoven gasped out as the Grim Reaper loomed up, nor do I wish to. Let her now return, so to speak, whence she came.

Herr Goethe senior is, alas, a somewhat shadowy figure but, perhaps, it is just as well. What one might call literary fathers make on the whole a pretty poor showing. We all know of the unsatisfactory nature of Dickens's dad. Closer to the present day there has been the colourful figure of Sir George Sitwell, seemingly quite unaware of the brilliance of the children he had hatched and who merely kept wailing what a pity it was that his daughter Edith had never 'taken up' lawn tennis. Even in his eighties, Balzac's lustful old father was still active and vigorous among what must have been a singularly geriatric-geared bevy of village maidens. The examples of unfortunate and inadequate paternity are endless. Were some of them unconsciously driven to eccentric and defiantly show-off behaviour in a desperate effort to reassert themselves? It is, as history reveals, very difficult for some fathers to stomach the fact that their sons are going to be of far greater interest and importance than they ever were themselves. Mothers take such discomfitures calmly and, indeed, welcome them. Pride in their children, so often denied to egocentric fathers, keeps them going.

Of whom would one's First XI of agreeable and unusual literary mums consist? High in the batting order comes Edward Marsh's mother, Jane, who was tone-deaf. Asked to identify a piece of music that was being played, she replied briskly that as far as she was concerned it was either 'God Save the Weasel' or 'Pop Goes the Queen'. Boxed on the ear for some childish offence, she at once boxed herself on the other out of a love of symmetry. Then there was James Lees-Milne's mother and her passion for ballooning. If a balloon chanced to put down near her, she could be counted on to climb speedily into the basket and be borne loftily away, sometimes for a full week's absence. Richard Church's parents (and if you haven't read *Over The Bridge* take a bad conduct mark and get it at once) met under an umbrella on a soaking day in Cheyne Walk, his grandfather being one of those domestic tyrants who, not liking the look of a mutton-chop, would hurl it moodily into the fire. There was no moodiness about entrancing Mrs Church, rattling out her *valses brillantes* in spirited sessions at the bogus-sounding Broadwood-White pianoforte and, with the greenest fingers in the whole of SW11.

At a different position on the social ladder we find Lord Berners's mother, a charming creature who was only really happy and fully at home on a horse, possibly because it provided a convenient means of escape from her father, who sat all day long in a darkened room emitting a never-ending stream of loud groans and curses (his occasional visits to church caused alarm among the officiating clergy as their sermons were apt to draw forth a crescendo of violent oaths, upon which there was a scamper to the altar, the Blessing was hastily pronounced, and the congregation rapidly dispersed, looking anxiously over its shoulder).

What sort of assessment can one make, I wonder, of Shakespeare's mother? The known facts are meagre indeed and it is extremely unfortunate that in the Bard's day the word 'mother' almost meant either 'an apparatus for chicken-rearing' or 'the disease of hysteria' and all the emotional instability that goes with it. Quite so. It is therefore hardly surprising that some of the mothers in the plays don't rate many marks out of ten. If we knew where to look, I expect that the Danish records would show that Queen Gertrude, a deeply unsuitable mother and indolent and sex-obsessed into the bargain, made but a poor showing as President of the Elsinore Women's Institute, muddling lecturers' dates and losing the key of the petty-cash box. Lady Macbeth has 'given suck', as she is the first to inform us and in a somewhat immodest manner, and so must have had at least one child, but whatever became of it, may one inquire? She was, she tells us further, quite ready in certain circumstances to 'dash the brains out', and what kind of motherly conduct is that? I have never personally been too happy about the culinary ingredients that went into the steaming hotpot that graced, as the principal *plat*, the Banquet in Act III that was such a social flop. Plenty of herbs and veg, of course, but what else to give it, unfortunate word, *body*? As a hostess, Lady Macbeth would, as we know, stick at *nothing*.

And whatever can one make of Queen Lear, deserting the sinking ship and abandoning a husband who is plainly rapidly going dotty, together with three daughters, two of whom are obviously becoming 'handfuls'? Her refusal to show up at all must have been very wounding. She probably hooked it, and who could really blame her, to some quiet and healthful resort (Bognor) with a doughty Knight and the scandal was hushed up, with possibly a false announcement of her death. Not a reputable mother, anyway. As you see, white-haired old Mrs Goethe has much to recommend her and is an example to all. Do watch out for 1982.

Roger Woddis

Meeting of the Magi

(After T. S. Eliot)

The Bilderberg Group of Western politicians, bankers and industrialists met last weekend at the Imperial Hotel, Torquay.

A closed meeting we made of it,
Just a few friends gathered together
To decide the future of the earth:
Our ears cocked and our noses sharp
For a shift in the weather.
And Henry and Helmut and Baron de R.,
Civilised, soft-spoken and suntanned,
Sitting down in a carpeted room,
Chewing your children and your
children's children.
There were times we regretted
The names dropped, the unveiled agenda,
And the whey-faced waiters
bringing brandy,
And the titbits fed to the
nosing newsmen,
Seeing something sinister in
our deliberations,
And the cat almost bolting from the bag,
And the secret panels and the
hidden levers,
And the tongues tied and Lord
H.'s lockjaw.
A hard time we had of it,
Convincing the world we were
only talking
And not linked to the Mafia or Moriarty.
At the end we left our green-baize tables,
Talking in whispers,
Bound by an oath of silence, denying
That we were the Illuminati.

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Letters to the Editor

Plutonium and Politics

Sir, In your editorial of 15 April, you state '. . . the question is about plutonium – the most potent and dangerous of all elements, and an element which (unlike uranium) does not occur in nature, but is brought into existence by processes dependent on human volition'. Leaving aside the question of what the 'potency' of an element may be, and how one may decide whether one element is more or less potent than another, it is worth inquiring what beliefs about the nature of life and the universe lie behind the remainder of the sentence. It is implied that there is something *worse*, or at least suspect, about an element which is brought into existence by processes dependent on human volition. Uranium is relatively okay because it exists in nature.

Does your leader writer then believe that the universe is divinely planned, and to bring something new into it is an act of impiety? Does he, or she, perhaps hold that some entity called nature exists, which 'holds a balance', and may 'strike back' if we attempt to frustrate its ends? Does he believe that only man is vile, that evil entered the world with the fall of man, and that it is a higher duty to be a friend of the earth than not an enemy of the people?

It is profoundly worrying to find lurking in the subconscious of the NS, a journal with aspirations to reason, the bases of that obscurantist philosophy which time and again has postponed or prevented the relief of suffering by fuelling the opposition to scientific, medical or social progress. There may be good arguments against the use of plutonium, but this particular one is as intellectually respectable as to argue that if God had intended us to smoke, he would have put a chimney in our head. If God had intended us to use plutonium . . .

In any case, the distinction drawn by your leader writer is without foundation. The cataclysm which built up the elements which now form the earth undoubtedly produced quantities of plutonium, but because of its short lifetime, it has passed from the scene. Moreover, in Africa, at Oklo, nature herself produced a water moderator reactor which consumed uranium, and the production of plutonium can be verified. Further, the heavens themselves, as well as telling the glory of God, rain down on us high energy particles, which not only give us an unavoidable dose of radiation, but produce neutrons, some of which are absorbed in uranium producing plutonium. Man is not, after all, the cunning artificer you credit, or rather discredit, him with being.

T. E. CRANSHAW

9 Third Acre Rise
Botley Oxford

Sir, While I have no objection to biased editorials – after all, what are political journals for if not to be biased – I was shocked by the inaccuracies in your front page article. Although any fast breeder reactors that may be brought into service will undoubtedly produce plutonium in copious quantities, no one is suggesting that that plutonium should be left lying about for 105 years. Plutonium itself is an excellent reactor fuel for conventional reactors. The waste disposal problem reduces to the elimination of the plutonium products. Most of these are lead (Pb), which is also the main decay product of the naturally occurring uranium, which is the starting point of the whole process. The radioactive decay products of the combined processes – fast breeder followed by conventional reactor – will be comparatively small in bulk, perhaps a few tens of tons, in the unlikely case of all the world's electricity being produced in this way. The total radioactivity released by these products will be less than that which would have been released by the natural uranium if it had been left to its own devices. This is because the reactors exploit the tendency of natural systems to change from less stable to more stable forms. Fast breeder reactors will not cause an increase in the average level of radioactivity.

I would not, however, wish to suggest that there are no dangers in a plutonium based economy. Instead, I must draw attention to a major problem which has escaped the attention of the 'environment' lobby, though probably not that of the Treasury. This is the possibility that some nations, tempted by unfavourable balances of trade, will produce surpluses of plutonium for export to less well-developed countries. Since a few pounds suffice to make a bomb – the critical mass of plutonium can be calculated on the back of the proverbial envelope – this would end all hope of limiting the spread of nuclear weapons. This possibility is very real since the plutonium produced by a fast breeder will be much cheaper than the enriched uranium now used in conventional reactors.

I suggest that this danger can be met by, first, planning plutonium production to meet no more than the needs of indigenous conventional reactors, secondly, obtaining an international agreement never to export plutonium and thirdly, most practically, by building the plutonium fuelled reactors on the same site as the fast breeders. That would eliminate the need for an elaborate organisation for protecting large amounts of fissile material in transit.

While the environmental problems of fast breeder reactors are receiving much attention at present, the political and diplomatic problems seem to be neglected. These are the real problems. The sooner the Labour movement starts to discuss them, the better.

DAVID PERKIN

Nuclear Physics Laboratory
Keble Road
Oxford

In Defence of Diana Mosley

Sir, Robert Stanton (Letters 22 April) gave a lame, rambling and irrelevant defence of Diana Mosley's recent book. The letter does not merit a detailed reply but without spending much valuable time and encroaching too much on your valuable space, it is perhaps sufficient to refer to two of the 'red herrings' in the last paragraph of his letter.

The reference to Hiroshima is entirely irrelevant in the context of Diana Mosley's pre-war friendship with, and admiration for, Hitler. The US was at war with Japan, and President Truman's decision on the Hiroshima bomb was taken in order to shorten the war (commenced by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour) and, rightly, to save American servicemen's lives – whereas Germany had *not* been attacked by Jews (of that country or of any other). US policy had never been to exterminate all (or any) Japanese, even despite the atrocities committed by the Japanese in their P.O.W. camps – whereas the official German government policy (and that of particularly Sir Oswald, and Lady Mosley's friend Hitler) to exterminate all Jews had nothing at all to do with shortening the war for Germany or saving German lives.

As to Mr Stanton's reference to Mrs Thatcher – unlike the Mosleys' friendship with and declared admiration for Hitler – it is well known that she has never sympathised with or even been a personal friend of any government leader of communist China or of Russia or any other country that has been guilty of murder or genocide.

L. GORDEN

National Liberal Club
Whitehall Place, SW1

Sir, In defence of Lady Diana Mosley's friendship with Hitler, and her whitewashing of Germany's anti-semitic policy, Robert Stanton stresses the identity of Chaim Weizmann's idea of a Jewish state with the policy of the British Union of Fascists; this is a distortion of historical facts. In his sympathetic biography of Sir Oswald Mosley, published by Macmillan, Robert Skidelsky writes as follows:

> In the Thirties, the argument was that Jewish finance was pursuing its 'implacable vendetta' against Germans because Germany had 'suppressed the great Jewish interest'. Stories of persecution Mosley dismissed as 'lying Jewish propaganda' . . . Mosley never explained what he meant by Jewish finance, never in fact explained what he meant by Jews . . . The 'final solution' could be to resettle Jews in one of the many waste places of the world possessing great potential fertility (though not in Palestine or the British Empire where they could recover the status of nationhood).

The recovery of Jewish nationhood in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people was Chaim Weizmann's central idea.

At first Hitler, too, tried to expel Jews, who were in Europe long before there was a German state, into Madagascar: he finished up with the murder of millions. To his credit, Robert Stanton says that 'nothing can minimise the moral enormity of what took place'.

During the last few years, Sir Oswald Mosley has tried hard to live down his Fascist record and anti-semitism; he is not being helped by his loyal wife Diana and her defenders.

S. I. LEVENBERG

4 Regent Street
London SW1

Chucking Smith

Sir, Your editorial (NS 22 April) states 'the only proper objective of British policy is to deprive Smith of his power as rapidly as possible. We naturally hope that it can be done without grievous bloodshed, but the central principle is that it must be done.' How easy to go to bed early after writing that.

The homeopathic socialists who wanted victory for the NLF and Khmer Rouge in Asia at all costs and are now impenitent about the new Vietnamese and Cambodian governments will find nothing shocking in that passage. But just as I don't find them holidaying in Saigon right now, I don't expect to see them volunteering for the 'grievous bloodshed' necessary to satisfy the principles of Great Turnstile's *savants*.

'That Smith is a great twister' is undeniable, but it is idle to pretend that the first black government in Zimbabwe will not give priority to killing a lot of blacks who aren't supporters of it. The reality of 'majority rule' is illiberal government by a gang of bullies who happen not to be European: the phrase has little to do with political freedom, but is a totalitarian stunt to get control of raw materials.

If we are to have 'grievous bloodshed' in southern Africa, let us at least not be dreamy about the reason or naïve about black leadership. 'There is no such thing as justice in a state' as Lord Radcliffe wrote in *The Problem of Power*; 'it is merely a fiction that men, who are conscious of their individual weakness,

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think up to keep the wild men down. Or it is a word that the people in power use in order to give a moral cover to what is really their own material interest.' That cuts both black and white alike.

R. P. T. HINES

12 Wilkinson Street
London SW8

Hot Rocks

Sir, While agreeing with the general attitude of Ronald Harker in his article 'Food, Energy and the Future' (NS 22 April) and applauding the setting down of hard facts concerning man's ability to support himself, I feel that I must point out that one statement he makes has no real scientific basis at the present day or even in the foreseeable scientific future. He claims that 'heat from inside the earth can be harnessed for human use and is inexhaustible'. The context in which he makes this statement leads me to the conclusion that he is thinking of the research that is being undertaken into drilling into supposedly 'hot rocks' that underlie areas of Britain.

From a geological viewpoint the feasibility of this research is highly questionable. The efficiency of the system depends on the ability of cold water pumped into the rocks to circulate and thus extract heat from the rocks before returning to the surface. This, therefore, requires that the rocks be fractured in order to obtain the maximum rock to water contact and thus maximum heat extraction. The likelihood of there being highly fractured rocks underground is small, simply because the combined effects of heat and pressure tend to close them.

Even if this problem was overcome (by massive underground explosions?) the heat obtainable is exhaustible due to the very poor thermal conductivity of rocks, i.e. one can remove the heat quickly but the rocks take a very long time to replace it.

So even on a theoretical basis there is clear-cut evidence that the extraction of heat from rocks is not the panacea that Ronald Harker implies, and practically speaking the cost of drilling deep into very hard rocks is enormous. Might I suggest that Ronald Harker has himself fallen victim to the propaganda of a Government trying to appear to be doing something?

HUGH MACDONALD

Department of Geology
The University
Glasgow

Severed Heads

Sir, Donald Gould's 'A Gentle Frankenstein' (NS 22 April) stimulated a recollection from my youth in the 1940s, namely, a walk along Blackpool's Golden Mile which at that time had many sideshows. Outside one of these shows a barker had attracted a large crowd with a story about a recent railway accident in France which resulted in a young woman having her head severed from her body. The girl had not died but had been saved by a miraculous operation enabling the girl's head to be attached to her body. The crowd was invited to step inside to see the result of this incredible operation for themselves. I accepted the invitation and paid my money. On the inside I saw a fully working body connected by various tubes and cables to an equally fully working head. No hint of quadriplegia, as in Mr Gould's report of Dr White's operation with monkeys. But then the girl's Blackpool operation was all done with mirrors – so perhaps Dr White ought to follow suit. For it seems to me that his medical surgical operations have as much relevance to the progress of modern medicine as Barnum's 19th-century display of a real mermaid had to the progress of modern biology. It's a pity that so many contemporary 'scientists' appear to be unable to distinguish between projects suitable for a fairground and those appropriate to a scientific laboratory.

JOHN LINSIE

33 Grasmere Avenue
Coventry

The Body-Carers

Sir, Flora probably addressed their advertisement to women because *they* are the ones who do most of the housekeeping, shopping and cooking. It is a more convenient and economical way of managing a household than if every member bought his/her own food and used the kitchen as and when required; chaos and irritability tends to ensue. In any case, it is puzzling to know that Nell Dunn is 'incensed' and Ron Brown finds it an insult to a woman to be thought of as a person who actually enjoys caring for the wellbeing of husband and presumably children. I have been doing it for over 40 years and haven't yet felt insulted. I have several reasons for preferring to do the shopping and cooking myself. First I conceived it as my duty when I was first married; then I feel that I am a much better cook than my husband, and a better timekeeper so that we do have our meals at a reasonable time; but, more importantly, I enjoy getting well-balanced meals which, I believe, make for healthier and better looking people; and I enjoy making love with a shapely and comely man rather than with a sagging, potbellied, triple-chinned oaf.

WINIFRED CRUTCHFIELD

Copthorne
Crawley, Sussex

Sir, I hope Nell Dunn is as incensed by advertisements for life insurance which imply that men ought to be concerned for the financial security of their womenfolk as she is by advertisements for margarine which imply that women ought to be concerned for the health of their menfolk. I'm not sure I understand why Ms Dunn is so keen to stamp out altruism in marriage, or indeed what she thinks marriage is for, but clearly what's sauce for the gander . . . If I am to die before my time because my wife can't be bothered to buy me proper margarine, then after I'm gone the selfish cow can fend for herself.

DAVID WATKINS

Bridgend
Glamorgan

Thatcher's Children

Sir, Seldom has so much bigoted rubbish been squeezed into such a small space as in Francis Wheen's report on the Federation of Conservative Students conference at Egham (NS 22 April). One can only assume that the strain of an NUS conference the week before proved too much. As one of the delegates at the conference I was not aware of the swing to the Right, examples of which were so desperately selected and gleefully recounted. One of the first questions to Mrs Thatcher asked her to condemn the National Front, and where was Wheen later in the week when the Monday Club representative was received with such hostility? The Federation is not 'evenly divided' on the question of participation within NUS – for the great majority the policy of staying in and attempting to change it is a lesson which has been learnt from the Left in other spheres of politics. Mike Forsyth, on the occasions I have heard him speak, has always urged FCS to play a greater part within NUS.

The Egham conference was a forum for discussion and debate in a way which the Blackpool Conference could not be. Wheen has ignored this. Of course there were differences of opinion; within such a broad party it would have been worrying if there were not. Despite the more colourful characters who, if Wheen is to be believed, dominated this festival of decadent fascism, enlightened policies were discussed in a reasonable way.

As for the songs, at the end of an alcoholic evening, they may have been rather tasteless, but no more so than some of the chants of various members of the far Left at people like Sir Keith Joseph. 'Better a Tory drunk than a Socialist sober.'

NICK PAGET-BROWN

Derwent College
York University

Stranger than Fiction

Sir, Science fiction is, indeed, a small world, within which it is common knowledge that I have been a close friend of Hillary Bailey (formerly Mrs Moorcock) for many years, but to suggest, as Mr Moorcock does in his review of *Science Fiction at Large* in your issue of 15 April, that I am his 'ex-wife's boyfriend' displays a lamentable lack of tact and kindness to both of us. Rather than enter into such private matters, Mr Moorcock might have used his column inches to explain *why* he found my own contribution so 'disappointing'. However, the only contribution to which he accords the courtesy even of description is that by John Brunner, whom sf insiders will have no difficulty in identifying as 'a close friend whose work, in the main, I greatly admire'. Mr Moorcock would do well to practise what he preaches – and leave the reviewing of science fiction to those who have neither a partiality towards, nor an animus against, the writers (or the field) under review. The surest way to avoid incest is to practise chastity.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Flat 3
73 Queen's Gate, SW7

John Raymond

Sir, As one of a family who all dearly loved John Raymond, and who gained over more than 25 years so much from his learning and friendship, I write to thank Paul Johnson for his moving memoir of John (NS 22 April).

It is written out of a true knowledge of John's charm and astonishing breadth of reading (he gave our children exactly the right book as they grew up every Christmas – which he often spent with us). And it takes away the bitterness of the arid and patronising notices which appeared in *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph.*

BERNARD GUTTERIDGE

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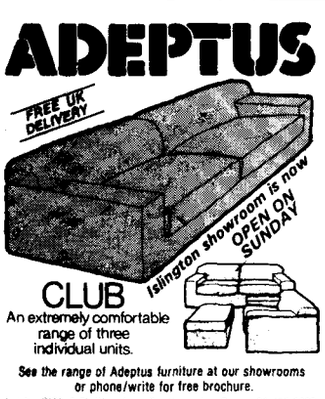
London SW7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BOOKS IN GENERAL

E. J. Mishan

Permissiveness and Its Discontents

Social Limits to Growth by FRED HIRSCH
Routledge £5.50

This new book by Fred Hirsch is welcome for two reasons: it adds a well-written monograph to the polemical literature on economic growth, and it acts to fortify the anti-growth case by addressing itself to the social, as distinct from the currently more fashionable ecological, consequences of continuing economic growth in the advanced industrial countries.

Since the author makes no claims for originality, no slight to his achievement may be presumed if, in order to place his theses in wider perspective, I touch upon some of the intellectual antecedents of his main ideas. Indeed, the book lends itself to this sort of review since, although the close texture of the argument is relieved by minor theses and digressions, two main themes stand out clearly. The first turns on what Hirsch calls 'positional goods', and issues in conclusions that, if accepted, blight the hopes still reposed by many in the meliorative powers of further economic growth in the wealthier countries of the world. The second theme, which is more sinister, relates the growth ethic to the collapse of the moral substructure not only of the capitalist order but of the modern economy generally.

The first theme emerges from reflections on the common observation that, continuing material progress notwithstanding, the mass of the people never come to enjoy all that the rich minority enjoyed. A tentative answer, as Hirsch acknowledges, was advanced by Sir Roy Harrod in 1958 who referred to an unbridgeable gulf between what he called 'democratic wealth', on the one hand, which wealth was held to comprise goods available to everyone and which increase with rising productivity, and on the other, 'oligarchic wealth' which consists of such things as servants, land, and art masterpieces, available only to the few. It is these two categories that are transformed by Hirsch into a 'material economy' and a 'positional economy' respectively.

In order to assess the significance of these categories, let us go back to 1949 when the American economist James Dusenberry first propounded his 'relative income hypothesis', slangily referred to as 'the Jones' effect'. It stated that, what comes to matter in an affluent society is not so much consumption *per se* but status as measured by one's position in the income structure – or, for that matter, the pecking order within the professions. This attitude, if true, is by itself sufficient to explain the apparent failure of sustained economic growth to continue to raise levels of social well-being in the advanced economies – an alleged phenomenon consistent with Richard Easterlin's findings in 1973 that, according to a wide variety of polls, the improvement in US per capita income since World War II was accompanied by no discernible change in the proportion of the American people reporting their lives as 'happy'.

Hirsch's positional goods then – at least those that are not bought as a form of protection against the spread of environmental disamenity – can be said to add some embroidery to the Jones' effect by way of extending the 'conspicuous consumption', enjoyed by Veblen's leisure classes, to their consumption, also, of the less conspicuous privileged goods. Thus, the satisfaction derived from status, or from *relative* income regarded as an index of status (Dusenberry), may be augmented by expenditures designed to display status (Veblen) and to perpetuate family privilege (Hirsch).

To make the matter plainer, the fact that some of Hirsch's positional goods, such as land or art treasures, happen to be finite in supply (as emphasised also by Harrod) is merely incidental in this context. The essential point is that the goods chosen by the rich, whether conspicuous or privileged or simply expensive – whether they consist of Rembrandts, yachts, troops of servants, luxury travel or access to exclusive clubs – are *relatively costly* and, as such, are available only to a wealthy minority.

It remains only to remind ourselves that these variations on the Jones' effect arise only in societies possessed by the 'growth ethic', which expresses itself in boundless ambition and, consequently, in chronic dissatisfaction with one's present status. In a traditional society, at least one in which each individual's niche in the hierarchy is believed to be pre-ordained and unalterable, one's economic role, no matter how humble, is not of itself an active source of dissatisfaction.

In view of the magnitude of the social problems caused by the corrosive nature of the Jones' effect, the more specific measures recommended by Hirsch – a payroll tax on top executive salaries, and placing health, education, and welfare wholly within the public sector – strike me as being about as useful as a proposal to repair a leaky tap when the house is burning down.

Hirsch's second main theme, developed in the latter part of the book, is more basic. The great merit claimed by liberal economists for a competitive private enterprise system is that its efficient operation does not depend upon benevolence but rather on that most pervasive of human attributes, self-interest. It was always conceded that some order had to be maintained by governments. But the powers of government were not to extend beyond those necessary to enforce laws and control the money supply. In the last few years, however, it has become increasingly recognised that this vital force of self-interest has, itself, to be constrained by an unwritten moral constitution if the operation of the market, or the modern bureaucracy, is to produce beneficent results.

A modern economy in which managers, workers and consumers lied, stole and cheated whenever such recourse seemed likely, on balance, to advance their private interests, would produce economic chaos. Since it is not simply the fear of discovery and punishment that restrains such behaviour, one may infer the widespread acceptance of a moral code. Indeed, according to Roland McKean, day-to-day business transactions, far from being directed solely by calculated self-interest, are guided by conventions of civility, courtesy and obligation. According to Hirsch, however, recent developments have been such as to foster a purer spirit of self-interest, unalloyed, that is, by traditional restraints. In consequence the foundations of the modern economy are being fissured.

It is possible to round out the picture by drawing on the contributions of other growth-sceptics. As Walter Weisskopf observes in his *Alienation and Economics*, the pursuit of profits, channelled into innovation and mass production, could be rationalised by liberal reformers in the 19th century. By the middle of the 20th century, however, as Galbraith and other economists have remarked, the historic rationale of capitalist expansion came to look less than flimsy. One has only to reflect on the growing range of expendable products – of 'luxuries', of exhibitionist attire, of extravagant inanities, currently absorbed (despite pockets of destitution) by the consumer society to recognise that, today, it is less than a half-truth to assert that industry serves the needs of people. For the continuing expansion of modern industry depends directly on its continuing success in enlarging the appetite of the consuming public so as to enable it to engorge the burgeoning variety and volume of goods. Traditional restraints on self-indulgence must perforce give way. The unrooted society, the permissive society in fact, is one of the pre-conditions of sustained economic growth.

As I observed in my *Costs of Economic Growth*, the secularisation of society, consequent upon the rising prestige of science and the collapse of ecumenical faith, has also contributed to this transformation. The emerging generation (in spite of its commendable concern with environmental and other causes) lives in a society without religion, without patriotism, without civic pride, and apparently without transcendental purpose. Not surprisingly, it is impatient of authority and of any institution believed to impede its claims to immediate gratification. Increasingly, it espouses an 'own ethic' designed to rationalise its conduct no matter how wayward or deviant, resting its case merely on the depth of its convictions.

Economic determinism is a frightening doctrine. But is it too far-fetched to trace the animus of women's liberation to those familiar labour-saving innovations that, over the century, have rendered their domestic services increasingly expendable? And what of the permissive society which, beginning

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with the joyous rejection of 'Victorian' guilt, progresses to an abandonment of the vestigial sense of shame, moves on to a clamorous rejection of any restraint on appetite, and culminates in adopting the experience of pleasure as an infallible guide to the good life? It is, surely, a providential development by means of which the modern sophisticated economy, continuously under institutional compulsion to expand, can be kept going.

Yet this seemingly inevitable outcome produces a 'contradiction'. As Hirsch clearly perceives, and as Samuel Brittan apparently failed to perceive, the ethos of the permissive society, in so far as it erodes the traditional sense of personal responsibility and obligation, acts also to undermine the efficient working of the economic system itself – whether privately-owned, state-directed, or mixed.

To where does this tend? I have argued elsewhere that economic growth in the West is producing innovations that create unprecedented social conflicts and ecological hazards, both of which demand increasing government control. This consequent trend toward more government is aggravated by the perils of the permissive society. For, as the moral restraints on which any civilisation is founded are scrapped in the name of individual emancipation, so in the name of public safety must the state expand its powers. Internal repressive mechanisms are replaced by external ones. The permissive society, it transpires, is the precursor of the totalitarian society.

John Morgan

Swansea Song

Dylan Thomas by PAUL FERRIS *Hodder & Stoughton* £7.50
My Friend Dylan Thomas by DANIEL JONES *Dent* £3.95

Pressed about his concern for the word, and did its meaning matter, the subject of these two important books remarked, 'In the beginning was the word, so what?' Twelve hours I spent with him, a dazzled 23-year-old, wandering through Swansea, from the Bush to the Met. Much of the conversation is still slanderous about the living; much was charming, as when we talked about the Swansea Grammar School we had both been at; and he was kind enough to know that he and I were the only two people who had won the cross-country and the mile and played in the cricket team and, most important, edited the school magazine. He pointed out that I had also played rugby. I pointed out that he would be remembered as long as the English language lived. At which this, it seemed to me calm, funny man, asked: 'Do you think I've failed because the poems are selling so well?'

I was writing a profile of him: it appeared as his obituary. We had exchanged letters – by Mr Ferris's account now worth £120 – agreeing that the *Observer* should pay his train fare and hotel for his coming from Laugharne; and we knew, as we went to the BBC in Swansea and he recorded his famous talk about America, that he got the same expenses from Aneurin Talfan, and spent the night anyway with his pal Dan Jones – author of one of these works.

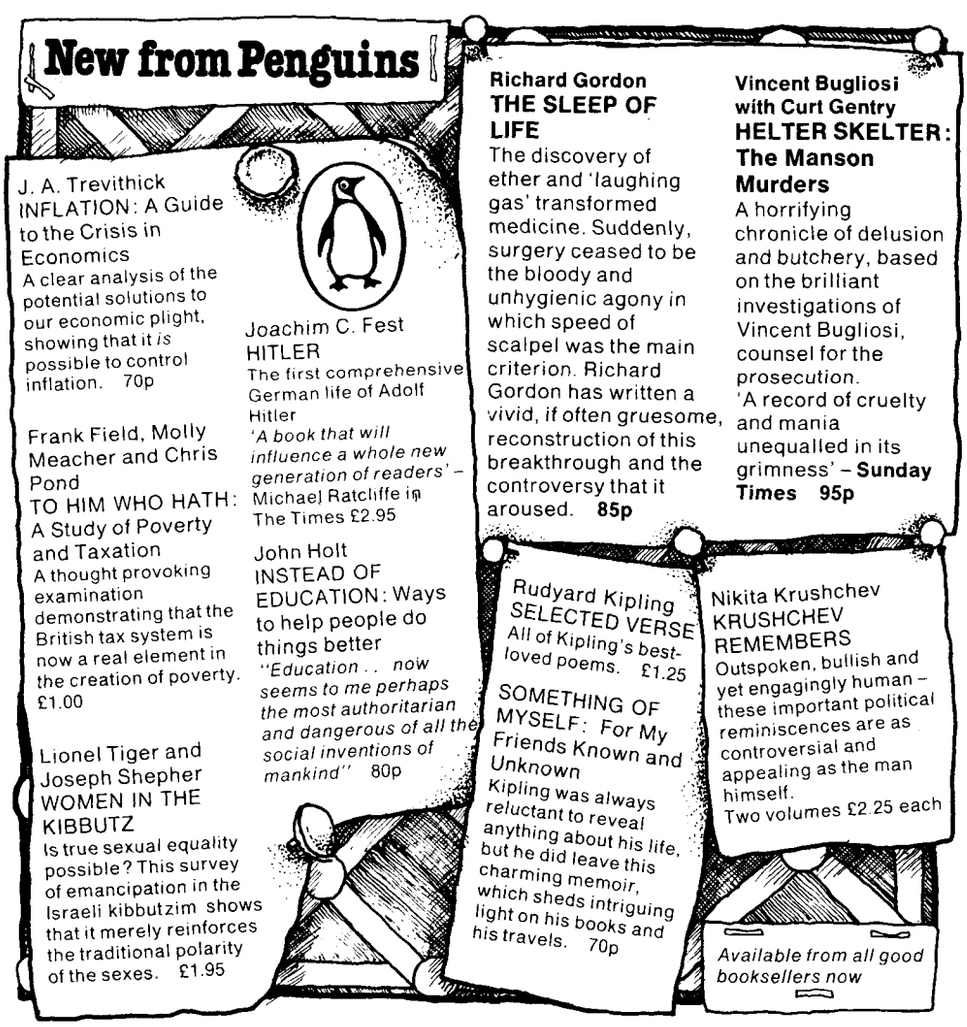
This waltz down the lane is not frivolously meant. Mr Ferris was my closest friend in the school of Thomas and Dr Jones, so that there is no point in pretending that either author, or indeed I myself, do not take a special view of a man who became the paradigm of a poet, at first in Britain and then in the United States: Bob Dylan's name is no accident.

Dr Jones's book is an affectionate memoir of a very funny friend whom he loved. Quite apart from his account of their childhood together, and their joke poems, it has considerable technical interest in the perhaps arcane, though to me fascinating record of chat between a distinguished composer and a poet regarded as musical but here remarkably and hilariously not so. The book is worth buying for a classic joke of Thomas's about *Trovatore* and Stravinsky alone; and also for Dr Jones's proper faith that Dylan Thomas wrote unmatchable works.

How much does the life of a poet matter? In Dylan's Thomas's case, do his origins, his childhood, parents, boozing, success, womanising, death, touch on the quality of his work? There was certainly a charm about him that distracts from the work. My view is that he was a man who wrote ten poems which will be known in the next millennium. Of other contemporaries Yeats, Eliot and Auden (whom Thomas read marvellously) will survive, but which others? Then there is *Under Milk Wood*, a work of perfect self-expression, the nearest thing to his talk; I've seen it performed in places as disparate as Bristol, Prague, Sofia and Detroit, to laughs of recognition. I make this point only out of a distaste at the manner in which certain reviewers have used Paul Ferris's book as a basis for gleeful attacks on Thomas's scrounging.

The two weaknesses of the Ferris book – which, quite properly, will be regarded as a classic of literary biography since it is an original work of scholarship and written with elegance – are that he fails to make clear his view of Thomas's talent and, to my mind, is unsympathetic to the Swansea boy's predicament. Mr Ferris has revealed a lot by his own researches into the previously unknown character of the poet's family background. And so, before praise, a few sharp remarks.

Ferris maintains that Thomas was worried at a feeling of sexual inadequacy, which is not a nice thing to suffer from. Later he was troubled by a fear of impotence, as who isn't? His evidence, though, is Thomas referring to himself as a 'little' poet. I think this a semantic misunderstanding. Thomas, unlike Mr Ferris, lived in a Welsh-speaking Swansea ambience. 'Little' in its Welsh form of *bach* can be merely a form of endearment. A hulking elderly clown may still be referred to as *Bachgen bach drwyg*, that is,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'naughty little boy'. Moreover, Dr Jones reports that before puberty, at their childhood home radio station, he and Dylan Thomas used the word 'little' as a running joke. Mr Ferris also maintains that they used the name *Bram* at that radio station because it was Welsh for fart: it is not. It was Bram Stoker; the Swansea Welsh for fart is *rhech*.

Otherwise, Paul Ferris's demythologising work will be of lasting importance. In the first place he infers that Thomas need not have died in New York. Had some daft doctor not believed the poet's myth about being a great drinker, then he might not have been a victim of a fatal dose of morphine, and he might have been with us yet. Dr Jones points out that Dylan Thomas was not regarded as being a great boozer: indeed many of his companions are about and laughing still who drank much more than the poet. However, both Mr Ferris and Dr Jones feel that the man had served his time – 'Belief in the Principle of Order leads to this and no other conclusion', as the Jones book concludes. I find this nonsense, even though both authors argue that Thomas was a poet of adolescence. Had a doctor not knocked him off, if that was the case, why could he not have become the writer of despair? Why shouldn't a sense of loss be as fructifying as a faith in hope? Ascribing a pattern to other's lives can be a glib biographical resolution.

But the most illuminating passage in the Ferris account is his description of the childhood. His discovery of Dylan's sister's letters is a shattering revelation. The father is revealed as an embittered failed poet whom the son adored; the mother is endlessly doting on the lovely boy. They eschew the Welsh language for reasons of ambition. The boy is awash in 'Aunties'. At the age of ten, by magic, his poems rhyme. And so he became the man who wanted to do what his father failed at, while women would always look after him, because he was enchanted, and poets were always enchanted. Much of what he did to friends now reads squalidly, and yet none of them ever said no to him. For him, in the last miseries in New York, *Fern Hill* might have come to seem a petrified forest. My only regret is that a man who offered and gave so much should be revealed as being so miserable. Who cares what he scrounged, except the envious? Read the poems.

Tom Sharpe

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Even Better

War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History by ROBERT ASPREY *Macdonald & Jane's* £15.00

Guerrilla warfare of one kind or another has been waged since the beginnings of history, but only in comparatively recent times has its true potential been fully recognised and developed. Glancing back over the past 200 years or so, we find guerrillas gradually coming to the fore. They played a not unimportant part in the Napoleonic Wars (in Spain, where they gained their name, and in Russia). In the 19th century numerous expensive, long-drawn-out and frustrating colonial wars were fought against what in fact were well-led native guerrilla forces – by the Russians in the Caucasus and by ourselves on the North-West Frontier of India and elsewhere. By his operations against the Turks in World War I and his famous descriptions of them T. E. Lawrence helped to rationalise the theory and conduct of guerrilla warfare and to put it on the military map. In World War II, the Germans, Italians and Japanese, being strategically on the offensive, but tactically and locally on the defensive, offered tempting targets for guerrillas, of which, on the whole, advantage was duly taken, an outstanding example being that of the Yugoslav Partisans who for the best part of four years contained in Yugoslavia upwards of a dozen enemy divisions.

It was not, however, until some years after World War II that the extreme example of Vietnam showed just what well-led and determined irregular forces could achieve over a prolonged period against seemingly insuperable odds. As a Yugoslav friend said to me, with a touch of envy: 'We were good, but they are even better.'

How have guerrilla, or as they are now sometimes called, 'low intensity', operations come to be the counter-point, the natural concomitant of modern war? The emergence (triggered off by the French Revolution) of nationalism as a powerful force in international affairs played its part in this. Other -isms have followed thick and fast. One essential of a successful guerrilla movement is that there should be a strong idea behind it and that this idea should be shared by the local population. And in our time there has certainly been no shortage of such ideas.

There is another thing. Modern arms and equipment, modern regular troops, modern civil and military installations, the whole machinery of modern life are immensely vulnerable to the enterprising guerrilla, whether urban or otherwise. Equally, present-day armaments and regular forces, being normally geared for use against enemies of their own size and weight, are apt to be surprisingly ineffective, if indeed usable at all, against guerrillas. As Lawrence put it, 'to make war upon rebellion is messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife'.

What is more, improved wireless communications, automatic weapons, modern high explosives and ever more sophisticated missiles, capable of being carried and launched by one or two men, have enormously increased the effectiveness and striking power of the guerrilla, making him a formidable adversary even for a superpower. Compared with regular forces the guerrilla is also cheap. In World War II an Irish friend of mine on a captain's pay and with a little high explosive destroyed over 100 enemy aircraft on the ground with his own hands.

Clausewitz, who rightly envisaged partisans as 'a kind of nebulous vapory essence', drew a number of valid conclusions on the subject from the Napoleonic Wars. The principles he enunciated were developed and elaborated and indeed put into practice a century later by Lawrence. World War II also offered plentiful examples of their successful application. Considering that all this has been duly put on record, one cannot help being a trifle surprised to find how little impact any of it seems to have made on the White House, the State Department or the Pentagon, and how little real effort there was to discover and apply the right answers to the problems posed by the war in Vietnam.

Henceforth, however, there will be no excuse for statesmen or top brass anywhere not to know all there is to be known about the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare. All they need to do is buy Mr Asprey's bulky but illuminating book. Its stated aim is 'to place the role of guerrilla warfare in history, in order to give the interested reader a perspective hitherto denied him.' In this the author succeeds admirably, giving us a detailed history of guerrilla warfare from the earliest times and examining in depth its theory and principles. He also cites numerous highly pertinent his-

Among this week's contributors:

Among SIR FITZROY MACLEAN'S recent publications are *A Concise History of Scotland* (1970), *The Battle of Neretva* (1970) and *To the Back of Beyond* (1974). He commanded the British Military Mission to the Yugoslav partisans from 1943 to 1945.

E. J. MISHAN is Reader in Economics at the London School of Economics. He has published a number of books, including *21 Popular Economic Fallacies* (1970), *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (1971) and *Making the World Safe for Pornography and Other Intellectual Fashions* (1973).

MALCOLM BRADBURY is the editor of *The Novel Today: Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction*, published this year by Fontana.

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torical precedents, where the application of these principles brought success or their neglect, failure, and discusses at length the technique both of insurgency and counter-insurgency.

The last third of his massive book is devoted to a detailed study of the war in Vietnam, in which, as he points out, the Americans made, from the start, every conceivable mistake, military, political and, above all, psychological. This Mr Asprey, who himself served for some years in the United States Marines, attributes to what he calls 'the arrogance of ignorance'. Quite often advisers, at all levels, would come up with the right answers, only to be overborne each time by the inertia and inflexibility of the machine and its predictable adherence to SOP – Standard Operating Procedure, (something which an alert enemy was naturally able to exploit to the full).

Mr Asprey has made an important contribution to the study of a branch of warfare which, as the 20th century moves uneasily to its close, seems likely to assume ever greater significance. His book is well planned and well written, full of interesting historical material and, last but not least, extremely readable. It should in my view be required reading for anyone concerned with military matters, both for the light it throws on its subject and also as a most convenient work of reference.

Eric Rhode

The Outsider

The Meaning of Illness: Selected Psychoanalytic Writings by GEORG GRODDECK translated by Gertrud Mander and edited by Lore Schacht *Hogarth Press* £7.50

Georg Groddeck was haunted by the fact that women become pregnant and give birth. He was so haunted, indeed, that he once imagined himself as pregnant. In birth the mother surrenders herself to an impersonal process that may result in life or death. Groddeck, the general practitioner, thought he observed something like this process omnipresently at work in the lives of his patients.

Resentment at not being able to bear babies appears to have sharpened some of his deductions. He thought one patient barren because she seemed to be identified with a mother she hated. Once this had been explained to her, he wrote, she happily went off and became fertile. (As so often, the Groddeckian cure sounds like magic.) Another patient vomited, he believed, because she wanted to get rid of an embryo – and memories of an intercourse – that she thought were poisoning her. He looked into the shining eyes and red faces of women in labour and concluded that they were in state of sexual excitement: 'the passage of the child's head through the vagina is more pleasurable than any other erotic sensation.' (Would anyone who had been through the experience agree?) A mother might call this pleasure pain if she so wished, but she could not call it suffering. You have only to look into the face of a newly-born child to see who is the real sufferer.

Groddeck appears to have been as much aggrieved by the caesura of birth as was his friend Otto Rank. Birth is a lifelong gash that only death can heal. Ejecting us from the Garden of Eden, it destroys any hope of unified experience. To be born is to fall from perfection in a manner that any Platonist might recognise. Our dreams and mental images – he writes – imply that we have an inner vision that precedes sight. Perhaps our eyes evolved to help actualise this vision. Anyone who has studied optics will have realized the extent to which the eye seems to have been fashioned as an instrument to deceive or, as Groddeck puts it, to repress.

Similarly, the infant has a capacity for communication – by feeling and touch – which the acquisition of language tends to distort. Groddeck does not envisage language as heightening our powers of integration: on the contrary, he believes that the intrinsic discriminations and system-building of conceptual thought undermine our sense of Wholeness. Language impels us to think in terms of the self versus the world, to see things from an 'I' point of view. Groddeck will not have this. 'There is no such thing as an "I"; it is a lie, a distortion to say "I think, I live." It should be: "It thinks, It lives." '

What is this 'It' that, Groddeck argues, shapes every limb, movement and gesture as well as more creative ventures? For a start, it is his One Great Idea, absorbing everything. As a term, the 'It' has no specific meaning: all we can be sure of is that, logically, it precedes most of the habitual ways in which we define human beings. Its reality is such that it makes the differences between male and female, mind and body, conscious and unconscious, seem irrelevant.

Groddeck had begun to reach these views as a young man. His father, a slum doctor in Berlin, worked part-time for an insurance company and was obliged to interview many hundreds of working people; Groddeck used to help him; and it was from the life stories of these mostly healthy people, and from scrutinising details of their behaviour and physique, that Groddeck found himself intuitively put in touch with some notion of impersonal utterance: it was as though our bodies spoke with more than tongues.

The utterances that most absorbed him were those that related to the question of why we fall ill (or stay well). He came to the conclusion that falling ill was the psychic equivalent of a protest: taking the form of 'you had better change your lifestyle, or else!' He wanted the doctor's role to be primarily one of deciphering these communications – and we are led to believe that his own sensitivity in this regard was exceptional. Many of those who came to his clinic at Baden Baden, where he worked for most of his life (he died in 1934), have

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testified to his catalyst-like ability to elicit (virtually without speaking) the anxieties associated with some physical symptom.

Yet his theory deserves to be challenged. For one thing, it raises the intolerable thought that if the 'It' brings on illness, then it must induce most deaths: in other words, most deaths are suicides. Groddeck put it slightly differently. Illness signifies a wish to return into the mother. 'Man has a longing for death because he longs for love, and a longing for love because he craves death, the mother's womb.'

As a founder of psychosomatic therapeutics, Groddeck is a hero to those interested in Alternative medicine. But he is related to our culture in other ways: to the symbolist-mystical tradition that flowers still; and, more marginally, to the psychoanalytical movement. An excellent Groddeck anthology, devised from the psychoanalytic point of view, allows us to measure the extent of this marginality. Its opening 100-page Groddeck-Freud correspondence will reassure the orthodox: it reveals how eagerly Groddeck wished Freud to accept him.

Needless to say, he wanted approval on his own terms. He had intuited the phenomena of transference and repression round about 1908 and remained rather unforgiving when he discovered that Freud had anticipated him in formulating these concepts. They later became friends: although waveringly so at the time *The Ego and the Id* was published. Groddeck claimed that Freud had used his 'It' idea in a misleadingly limited way, and Freud took the fire out of this objection by accepting it. 'I do not, of course, recognise my civilised, bourgeois, demystified Id in your It.'

There were times, of course, when Groddeck, quite understandably, found Freud's genius vexing; and then he turned the knife. ('Systematic minds need people like me in order to feel important, as the pinch of pepper that perfects the dish.') But in the main he writes to Freud unabashed love letters, touching in their possessive candour. His claims were such that he wanted Freud to come for treatment to his Baden Baden clinic. What a fantasy: to analyse the founder of psychoanalysis! I suspect that Auden's poem on Freud derives some of its more idiosyncratic sentiments from one of Groddeck's eulogies.

For his own part, Freud was charmed by Groddeck and protectively welcomed him into the movement. He paid tribute to Groddeck's vivid understanding of unconscious behaviour. Nonetheless, his letters convey a sense of disappointment. Time and again he insists on correcting the younger man and slightingly compares him to clowns or to Wilhelm Stekel. For all his warmth and generosity, Freud writes as a political man, asserting his superiority, keeping Groddeck in the position of errant son – which naturally increased the need for approval. Groddeck seems to have been forced into the position of being the outsider, the bearer in this relationship of any bad feeling or sense of eccentricity.

And in reputation, at least, he has continued to remain outside the psychoanalytical mainstream. Perhaps to see him in this way does him an injustice. Yet this is what he wanted, even though his grasp on psychoanalysis as a systematic means of investigation, which has setting, sequence and the workings of transference as its principal tools and modes of discipline, was non-existent. Rightly viewing the movement's historical connection with medicine as 'disastrous', he persisted in thinking in terms of cures, and instant ones at that. He somehow missed the point. Yet for all this, he did prefigure a development in psychoanalysis that Freud had barely a glimpse of: the present emphasis on the mother-infant relationship.

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Malcolm Bradbury

Made in Heaven

Marry Me by JOHN UPDIKE *Deutsch* £3.50

> 'Heaven,' Jerry said one night, entering her as she crouched above him. Afterward, he explained, 'I had this very clear vision of the Bodily Ascension, of me going up and up into this incredibly soft, warm, boundless sky: you.'
>
> 'Isn't that blasphemous?' She had acquired the courage to be curious about his ultimate intimacy, so opaque and hostile to her, his religion.

The tone and manner are unmistakable. It is, of course, John Updike; what other novelist do we have so preoccupied with this particular complex blasphemy, with sex as relevation and sacrament, the Christian body grinding on the bed? There are, in *Marry Me*, other Updike familiarities. The scene is the well-heeled Connecticut-

Two Poems by C. J. Monckton

Anniversary

Dead soldiers from their crumbling watch-towers
Fall, fly-blown; their eyes sunk greyly
In the sockets' ragged rims.
Tall ships no longer visit in our ports
Where harbour walls and docks
Grow grass and silence of neglect.

But it was just. No voyages
Were ended or begun. The harbour-master
And his crew moved inland
To escape the sea's sounds beating at their doors
By night. The lights no longer shone
Out from the jetty's cold extremity.

Finding the sea's sounds never formed a word,
The men moved inland, silent, lonely and absurd.

Alice Plays Cards with the Queen

Alice was satisfied. The kind old queen
Told her the game was harder at sixteen,
And said that she could hardly understand
The rules at her age. But Alice's hand
Was good, she said. So Alice sat and frowned,
And remembered once, when she was small, she'd nearly drowned
And everybody cared about her.
But the old queen found
That Alice always won, hand after hand;
So she said, 'You're not supposed to understand
The game, at any rate not at sixteen.'
Alice was satisfied. The angry queen
Moved over to a brand new page
And said that Alice must have lied about her age.
So Alice simply left the old bitch to her rage.

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and-Massachusetts shoreline commuterland, where the houses are Old Colonial and babysitters no problem, where the husbands work, the wife-mothers sit on the beach, watching the sky shade, minding the children and considering the tragic, affair-ridden queens of the season, until the trains, planes and cars come in and the couples are couples again, swimming naked off sailboats, dining together, going Greek dancing, playing volleyball. And the time, while specifically in the Kennedy regnum, is part of that long, secularised World War II hinterland, when Americans assert religion and act atheism, and dwell in what Jerry, the Lutheran hero hungry for his ascension in the new book, calls 'the twilight of the old morality'. And the dominant human lot is marriage; Jerry at his bodily ascension is coupling with his wife, and, as he says too, 'Here there are no institutions except marriage. Marriage and the Friday night basketball game.' But what happens if marriage – as God was in the heretofore – is asked to do rather too much?

Updike, besides being a lyricist of sex, has long been a novelist of modern marriage, of the anxious bourgeois couples. With some forays out, like the 'Rabbit' stories, some of the Olinger pieces, and the admirable *Bech*, he has built up, in various novels and story-volumes from the late Fifties onward, a clearly imprinted world. In the early versions, the couples, solemn, sexy and delicate, were just marrying, living in New York lofts and attics, bringing home bottles of wine after work; they were often artists, poets or writers, and shared with their creator a taste for epiphany. It is much to the point that Updike studied at the Ruskin School of Drawing in Oxford, and that the revelation of form has been a strong concern, very evident in the title story of *Pigeon Feathers* (1962). But, where many novelists hold their formal preoccupations to themselves, Updike has passed his on to his characters, who have habitually made their sexual sensations and turmoils, and the contingencies of their daily living, cry need for a revelation. In later stories, the couples bettered, and moved, with Updike himself, out of New York, up the coast, now looking in the landscape and in the small household sacraments of blooming pregnancies and bright young children, flesh of one's flesh, for the living vigour. It has long been known in the novel that the salvation of marriage is adultery, and so next there came the affairs: *Couples*, for all its best-seller gloss, is strong on the matter, a book given edge by the way the chaotic political world under Kennedy puts the characters, in their sexual dance, consciously into history as well as the world of draining faith and morality.

Marry Me – a book that in some ways feels like a late, softer replay of *Couples* – takes the issue one stage further: now the theme is the sacred divorce. Jerry is middle-aged, married to a wife, Ruth, whom he chose because a good wife was what she'd be; he is also much preoccupied with thoughts of death, the wrongs of the coffin, the duties of salvation. And he's hungry to read the signals of a dark, declining world for a revelation (so, to a lesser degree, are all the other characters, which is what allows them to consort with each other and not get mad). His marriage being diurnal, he is now having an idyllic affair with Sally, the wife of his neighbour Richard, which is perfect until it is discovered; yet he wills its discovery. Richard has in his turn had an affair with Ruth – a card that never quite gets played in the long episodes of anguish that dominate the book, when Jerry, trying to transgress the limitations of affairs, attempts to perpetuate the idyll by divorcing Ruth and marrying Sally; his necessary *Marry Me*. Where Ruth has managed her affair quietly and placed it ('She had had boy-friends, a husband, a lover; it seemed she could rest'), Jerry cannot. 'Jerry's fault as a lover, his cruel fault, was that he acted like a husband,' Sally thinks.

We have seen this redemptive character before in American writing; Dick Diver in *Tender Is the Night*, for example. It is his fate to fall into the quotidian, and so Jerry does. Richard, an atheist, a frank and vulgar sensualist, a character vouchsafed, for fairly clear symbolic purposes, vision from only one eye, becomes his secular adversary. A summer is spent while Jerry 'decides' between Sally and Ruth, living with his wife, telephoning his mistress. Updike negotiates, well, the different points of view, the angles on the affair, and the slow motion of Sally's status from the 'You're great' of the early pages to the 'She's not stupid and she's not unkind' of the later ones – when marriage, sexual relationship, family structure have all come under the scrutiny of 'sensible' discussion, and when the irritable violence under all the relationships, the tender selfishnesses and the opaque hostilities, have also come to light. Jerry's tender selfishness, hungry to salvage a failing world, loses, perhaps, more splendour than is intended; his role as the one man good enough for everybody begins to wear thin. Updike seems to sustain him to the last; the reader, watching the pressure of his vanity, may feel less kind.

Marry Me is deeply Updike; it is also something of a weepie from the late bourgeois world, and will probably go into the record as not one of his very best. But, if his solemn beddings are sometimes overposed, his sexual dialogue sometimes sentimental, his moral precision not quite as exact as it might be, Updike is superb at intersecting between the revelation and the void, moving from the bodily ascensions to the roar of Hoovers in the hotel corridor outside, or from the illicit pleasures of a night spent away in Washington to the detailed chaos of an airline strike, which spells the temporariness of all idylls. And if, in this tale of characters hungry for the redemptions of sex, art and religion, his sympathies seem mildly imbalanced, then Updike does know *his* form, the finesse of the literary text, and gives it to us with his usual richness.

Molly Holden

Still Life

The shining bud, in the small blue cup
on the window-sill, extends
one copper petal elegantly –
so like a small bird's stretching *of*
a fine-corded wing over
a slender claw that I almost
look to see it just as gracefully retract.

Susannah Clapp

Persecution Mania

A Place to Come To by ROBERT PENN WARREN *Secker & Warburg* £4.50
The Pathetic Phallus by CHARLES MACLEAN *London Magazine Editions* £4.75
The Invisible Victory by RICHARD GORDON *Heinemann* £3.90

Robert Penn Warren has written heatedly, multi-adjectivally and often persuasively about the American South since the Pulitzer-prize-winning *All The King's Men* was published in 1947. The earnestness of his quest for 'the voices in my own blood' – the voices of Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama – has been unquestionable, and remains so even when, as is the case with his new novel, the brew of Southern serious-

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ness seems too frequently heated over.

A Place to Come To follows the progress of one Jed Tewksbury, poor white of Dugton, Alabama, child of a handsome (and soon dead) wastrel father and a snappingly soft-hearted mother, who breaks her son's nose but weeps over his photographs. Brains win Jed both the tentative advances of Rozelle, the doe-eyed Dugton belle, and escape from Dugton to academe, where he first plays the redneck with some bitterness (a frequently repeated performance) and feels the words '*imperium intellectum*' fill his head 'like the slow, commanding tones of a great bell'. Not unpredictably, brains and the escape they afford prove to be his trouble: as he sets about trading rootedness for scornful detachment, buying fame with guilt and loneliness, his intellectual activities rapidly become an all-too-obvious parody of his actual existence. When his ultra-bland, ultra-holy young wife dies of cancer, Jed sets his mind to an essay on 'Dante and the Metaphysics of Death'; rediscovering the delights of Rozelle's 'orchidaceous swell' (now located in Nashville, Tennessee), Jed lectures on 'Love, Sacred and Profane in the Middle Ages'. He mooches from Italy to Nashville to Chicago, despising the slickness and smugness of community life, envying people's sense of their 'life in time', wooing and mostly losing out, at the end left with the hope – rather too generalised a wish to provide uplift – that he'll one day revisit Dugton with his son.

Lurking throughout *A Place to Come To* is the idea, discussed by Warren elsewhere, that Southerners see themselves as 'a persecuted minority'. But in this novel the sense of the South relies chiefly on a certain amount of beguiling description of chinaberry trees, dungareed men and chickens scratching up the dust, spiced with rather scant information about – though frequent reference to – poverty, snubs and humiliations. From this, and the leaving thereof, shame and a towering rage are supposed to spring fully armed. It's possible, but not inevitable, and inevitability is to the point.

And even were it properly fuelled, rage is insufficient to propel a character through 400 pages. Most of the major revelations afforded Jed Tewksbury turn out to be disappointments, despite the swathes of mystification and myth-making which overlay them. Discussion of the 'massive concurrence of forces' or the 'enacting of an iron script long since drawn' rarely succeeds in elevating twists of plot or personality; the narrator's sudden admission that he is unable to find 'an idea that touches life at the roots' is unlikely to elicit a similar response of horrified surprise from many readers.

Self-justification seems to be at work. The same over-anxiety results in some ungainly sentences, in which long similes are posted off with eager frequency, to go lolloping and gulping after their subjects. A face is compared to 'a boulder washed bone-white in a creek bed and then dried in the August sun when the drought came'. Such elaborateness is frequently self-defeating: the description of the face in question is intended to convey that it is 'non-committal'. Non-commitment isn't the best subject for Robert Penn Warren: part of what is wrong with this book is its attempt to whip up ferocity from bland material.

Charles Maclean's first novel features an army of arrow-shooting women who run a stud-farm and believe that Sonya Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina*, an army of purple-tweeded males who take issue with the 'absurd notion that human life is sacred' and eagerly envisage future monuments being erected to Beri-beri, and a band of Lefties, all denim and Thirties' rant, who use a Love Laboratory as their cover operation. It stars a man who likes sex but doesn't much care for women, and co-stars his penis which, though non-operational, is blessed with the gift of eliciting women's true views via their knickers.

The outraged merriment caused by exercising this talent – in the changing-rooms of departmental stores and elsewhere – is mixed with quite a lot of violence (nearly everyone ends up more-or-less bloodily dead) and a dash of metaphysics – the exploits of the hero being controlled by some unlovely apparitions from the Ministry of Cause and Effect. The result is an hysterical skidding of events and a satire which, though not without some ingenuity and smartness in its depiction of the cartoon-style characters, attacks too comprehensively and too predictably to bite: the overall effect is of a set sneer.

There isn't a great deal of sneering in Richard Gordon's latest medical adventure, though *The Invisible War* does pay some attention to the drawbacks of women. The chief concern of the narrator, a dogged biochemist, is to describe, with a lot of gasps and some engaging excitement, how one of the German brains behind Zyklon B also helped the development of the sulphonamide drugs, how his work helped Fleming, and how Fleming – unappealingly referred to here as 'old Flem' – shouldn't be given the credit for all that. He also traces his own progress, from a despised downstairs position as a butler's son, through humble work among the great (he it was who forgot to wash out Fleming's Petri dish) to welcome experimentation on germ warfare ('you could not fight the Nazis or the Kamikazee with half a smile on your face'). In doing so he displays three variously unsatisfactory wives: a housemaid who dies fairly promptly from puerperal fever (leaving him to observe that though 'the bell that tolls for mankind never makes pleasant music', at least three lives won't be spent in misery); an overshockable Scots girl who quits early, and the master's daughter, who mostly says 'wizard'. Rounding off a crammed and jolly book are a selection of dogmatic views on the lure of the Nazi and the iniquities of the class system.

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Edwin Brock

Woman Weeping

I saw that canvas when probable boredom
made its cloth impenetrable:
a dull girl filling her space
with food and a routine fantasy,
which is a subjectivity too small for art.

The crying was easy: there were
broken knees,
stars around streetlights, pets dying
and those days when we cried
to please each other.

Now one picture would be enough: there are
not so many empty walls. But each summer
burned her face and brushed away
that memory which would not cry.

Mourning is a kind of hibernation
which ignores seasons: I fell down
in winter and woke again to hoar frost
and empty trees. There is a history
of dry summers with grass burning,
people meeting and breaking free.

Today I sit by an open door quietly
but running,
my wife cries easily, breaking her summer
into diamonds. Freedom is a word
we shout as we pass by each other,
and this
an autobiography which will not become art.

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FESTIVALS

Mark Kidel

Snap, Crackle, Pop

Woodstock, that great gathering of the tribes back in the Sixties, may have suggested that rock music was all about peace and love; today's festivals, however, while carefully preserving the hippie era mythology, are more obviously about the maximisation of profits. While classical, folk and jazz programmes are announced months in advance, the line up at a rock festival remains a mystery until the very last minute: the total secrecy surrounding the plans for the major Jubilee jamboree at Wembley on 11 June is quite unconnected with Princess Anne's expected presence at that event. Events like this may be conceived up to a year in advance, but the list of participants depends to a major extent on the fickle movement of record sales charts and the notorious unpredictability of the rock world: the average rock band just does not have the lasting power of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and 'acts' like Placido Domingo, Andy Williams or John Denver are not as prone to heroin overdoses or motorbike crashes as the run-of-the-mill rock hero.

As details for most rock festivals are only finalised in the few weeks before the performance, little is known about events coming up this summer. Many promoters are reluctant to take the kind of risks that are entailed in organising what amounts to a tricky military operation. A large rock event cannot function without the heavy importation of American talent, but the falling value of the pound has made this rather more expensive than in previous years; besides, American bands, who can collect twice as much playing in a small US town as they can in Britain, are only interested in coming over if their appearance has some promotional value, as when the festival happens to coincide with the release of a new album.

It has also become more difficult to ensure the participation of the British bands with the greatest drawing power, as so many of these, forced into French or American tax exile, are only allowed 90 days a year in the UK. Hoping to get around this, promoter Peter Bowyer is planning a major outdoor concert beyond our tax frontiers, but within reasonable reach for British fans. A similar event, devised last year in the Isle of Man, in order to accommodate that highly popular bunch of tax migrants, the Average White Band, collapsed in the early stages of preparation.

The promoter's life has also been made more difficult by the major rock groups' increasing interest in the financial running of festivals. Bands like Led Zeppelin, the Beach Boys or the Who are no longer satisfied with a set fee: they will now demand a fee plus a percentage of the profits, or insist on running the whole event for themselves, paying the promoter a fixed amount for his work. According to veteran festival organiser Frederick Bannister, the only concerts worth putting on are highly organised single day events. Bannister promoted the 1970 Bath Festival at Shepton Mallet – a three-day extravaganza for over 100,000 people, modelled on the previous summer's Woodstock. He made a small profit, but besieged with the multiple problems of sanitation, shelter, food and crowd control, he now feels that 'it was not worth the risk and all the hard work'. This summer, he will be limiting himself to presenting another gigantic 12-hour concert at Knebworth Park in Hertfordshire, similar in style to those in the last three years which have featured Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones – just about the most popular bands in the business. Knebworth has developed a strong reputation as an extremely well-organised festival, providing excellent sound and general facilities for an audience of 100,000. Except in the first year, it has proved profitable, but it is the sort of mammoth enterprise

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Wed Sept 28	Evening	Amadeus Quartet – Clifford Curzon, Georg Hörtnagel Schubert: "Trout" Quintet Britten: Quartet No 2 (Op 36)			
Thurs Sept 29	Evening	Amadeus Quartet – William Pleeth Schubert: Quintet Britten: Quartet No 3 (Op 94)	Sat Oct 1	Evening	Hermann Prey – Leonard Hokanson Schubert: Lieder Recital
Fri Sept 30	Afternoon	Pierre Fournier, Julian Bream, Janet Craxton, Jean Fonda Schubert: Arpeggione Sonata – Cello Britten: Nocturnal after John Dowland – Guitar (Op 70) Britten: 6 Metamorphoses after Ovid – Oboe (Op 4) Britten: Cello Sonata (Op 65)	Sun Oct 2	Afternoon	Janet Baker, Peter Pears – Graham Johnson Schubert: Lieder Recital Britten: Canticle II Abraham and Isaac (Op 51)
Fri Sept 30	Evening	"Schubritteniade" A light-hearted evening in the style of a Schubertiade. Artists include Amadeus Quartet, Elly Ameling, Julian Bream, Osian Ellis, Peter Pears, Hermann Prey	Sun Oct 2	Evening	BENSON AND HEDGES GOLD AWARD Concert of finalists in a new International Concert Singers Competition
			Adjudicators		Peter Pears (Chairman), Nina Dorliak, Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Hughes Cuenod, Hans Hotter, Walter Legge, Gerald Moore

Gold Award preliminary sessions on Sept 26, 27, 28 will also be open to the public.

All concerts £4. Gold Award Final £2. Season for 8 concerts excluding Gold Award £25.
Special party rates on application.
Box office opens on 10 June 1977.
Benson and Hedges Festival Box Office, Aldeburgh Festival Office, High Street, Aldeburgh. Tel: Aldeburgh (072 885) 2935.

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

14th Music Festival of Touraine

From 24 June to 4 July

Programme dedicated to Franz Schubert

GRANGE DE MESLAY

Friday, 24 June at 9 p.m.
MELOS QUARTET OF STUTTGART

Saturday, 25 June at 9 p.m.
MAURIZIO POLLINI (piano)

Sunday, 26 June at 8.30 p.m.
PETER SCHREIER (tenor)
IRWIN GAGE (piano)

Thursday, 30 June at 9 p.m.
ORCHESTRE DE LA RADIO PHILHARMONIQUE HOLLANDAISE
Direction MICHEL TABACHNIK

Friday, 1 July at 9 p.m.
SVIATOSLAV RICHTER and ZOLTAN KOCSIS
(piano with 4 hands)

Sunday, 3 July at 8.30 p.m.
ELISABETH SOEDERSTROEM (soprano)
PAUL HAMBURGER (piano)

GRAND THEATRE DE TOURS

Saturday, 2 July at 9 p.m.
Monday, 4 July at 9 p.m.
DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU (baritone)
SVIATOSLAV RICHTER (piano)
(identical programme for both concerts)

INFORMATION:

Comité des Fêtes Musicales en Touraine
Hôtel de Ville 37032 TOURS Cédex.
Tél. (47) 05.41.98 (poste 744)

PLYMOUTH ARTS CENTRE

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29 June to 10 July

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For full details please send a 6½p stamp to:
Plymouth Arts Centre, 38 Looe Street, Plymouth PL4 0EB.
Tel: Plymouth 60060

Fishguard Music Festival — 1977

23 – 30 July Director John Davies

SIR GERAINT EVANS and Eiddwen Harrhy in a new children's opera
"What the old man does is always right"

Music Alun Hoddinott, libretto Myfanwy Piper, sets John Piper, choreography Terry Gilbert, production John Moody. Conducted by John Davies.

Festival also includes:
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Gabrieli String Quartet, The Ronnie Scott Quintet, Dyfed Choir. Conductors Paavo Berglund, Richard Hickox, with many international solo artists.

Details: Mrs Marion Butler (Ref. 8), Secretary, Festival Office, Summerhill, Fishguard, Pembs, Dyfed. Telephone 873612 (anytime).

Aldeburgh Festival

of Music and the Arts

10-26 June 1977

General booking now open
Festival Office, Aldeburgh, Suffolk (072 885) 2935

which most promoters would rather stay away from: John Martin, for instance, who with actor Stanley Baker organised the Lincoln festival in 1972 and lost money, now feels that large open air events 'give you a complete nightmare; you can walk out in the end with a nervous breakdown'.

The only surviving 'multi-day' rock festival will take place at Reading on 26, 27 and 28 August. In its 17th consecutive year, the National Jazz, Blues and Rock Festival, run by Jack Barrie and Harold Pendleton of the Marquee Club, is primarily devoted to British rock. In spite of its scale and duration, the Reading Festival is a low-key affair, characterised by the absence of supergroups and megastars. The audience never exceeds 25,000, and 60-70 per cent of the ticket-buyers travel, with their sleeping-bags and tents, from the other side of the Channel.

There are rock festivals on the Continent too, but as with our own, plans are made at the very last minute. One of the most successful, held in the Roman amphitheatre at Orange in the Rhône valley, will most likely not be taking place this year because of 'political difficulties' encountered in previous years.

There are fewer problems with jazz, celebrated in no less than 120 festivals throughout the Continent each year, and free municipally-run jazz festivals in several communist run Italian towns. Summer fixtures are less uncertain than in the rock field and clearly connected to an available stable of touring Americans. Over 100 musicians will play on three separate bandstands in this year's 'Grande Parade du Jazz' in Nice (7-17 July), and those appearing will include Count Basie, the Dizzy Gillespie Quartet, the Charlie Mingus Quintet, the Dave Brubeck Quartet, Clark Terry, the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Big Band, Cab Calloway, John Lewis, Teddy Wilson, Big Joe Turner, Joe Williams and the Muddy Waters Blues Band. The concurrent Northsea Festival at The Hague (15-17 July) features much of the same impressive line-up, with Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson and Joe Pass as extras. The same team will also be appearing at the Montreux Festival (1-24 July), which also includes three days of 'jazz-rock', and three days of folk and lighter rock with Donovan and Barbara Dickson among a list of other unconfirmed artists.

Two rather more specialised festivals take place in Germany earlier in the summer: the Oude Stijl (old style) Jazz Festival at

30th International Festival of Opera and Music

Aix en Provence

15 July – 8 August 1977

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13100 Aix en P.
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Glyndebourne Festival Opera *31 May - 7 August 1977*

Don Giovanni (Mozart), (all performances sold out) **La Voix humaine** (Poulenc), **The Cunning Little Vixen** (Janacek), **Falstaff** (Verdi), **Die schweigsame Frau** (R. Strauss), **The Rake's Progress** (Stravinsky).

Send large s.a.e. for booking brochure to: Information Office, Glyndebourne, Lewes, E. Sussex.

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Breda, Holland (19-22 May), entirely dedicated to trad and featurin gamong others our own Bob Wallis and his Jazzmen, and George Melly with John Chilton's Feetwarmers. At the opposite end of the spectrum, there is the very exciting 6th International New Jazz Festival at Moers (27-30 May) with an astonishingly comprehensive group of free jazz musicians including Anthony Braxton, Cecil Taylor, Thelonius Monk, Sam Rivers, the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the Parker-Lytton-Wheeler-Rutherford-Holland group from Britain. With no less than seven jazz festivals in Germany for June alone, there is good reason for the British fan to feel somewhat starved. There are only two gatherings of any note this summer, the first at Beaulieu (9-10 July) with among others, the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet, the Vic Dickenson Allstars, the Teddy Wilson Trio, Joe Venuti's Quartet, Kenny Ball's Jazzmen, Alex Welsh and his band, Humphrey Lyttelton and his band and the Stan Tracey Octet. Later in the month, there is a festival at Bracknell (23-34 July) with vibist Gary Burton's Quartet, Elton Dean's Ninesense, and Gateway (Dave Holland, John Abercrombie and Jack de Johnette).

The next event takes place in Newcastle in the autumn (21-30 October) and the organisers hope to present Lionel Hampton, the Gerry Mulligan Sextet, the John Surman Trio and Stan Tracey Octet. This festival, run without any subsidy from the Arts Council, is a brave venture, surviving only through continued support from BBC-TV who will be televising some of the performances.

While Britain may suffer from a dearth of 'multi-day' jazz events, we are well served with folk gatherings: there are no less than 35 folk festivals in the UK in June, July and August, with activity in every part of the country. In most cases the headliners come from a solid group of top British performers, the Watersons, Martin Cathy, A. L. Lloyd, the High Level Ranters, Vin Garbutt, John Kirkpatrick and Sue Harris and Rab Noakes, but each festival has a natural regional bias, as might be expected from the indigenous music 'of the people'. The festivals worth looking out for are at Norwich (17-19 June), Chorley, Lancs, for Wakes Week (14-17 July) and most of all Cambridge (29-31 July), always guaranteed to produce some exciting American headliners – as yet unannounced – but already promising as support Bert Jansch, Martin Cathy and Alex Campbell.

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LITERATURE FESTIVAL
JUNE 4—11th 1977

Over forty events featuring all aspects of books and their authors. Exhibitions, talks, seminars, readings, book fairs (both new and second-hand), films, children's events, personal appearances, folk, poetry and jazz—a crowded week during which both the serious and the light-hearted side of literature jostle for attention.

Highlights include Prospect Theatre in a new compilation of the works of Sydney Smith; a season of films by Marguerite Duras culminating in an appearance by this eminent French author to discuss her work both as novelist and film-maker; the Mersey Poets Adrian Henri, Roger McGough and Brian Patten; Melvyn Bragg presenting a staged version of "Read All About It" and the premiere of a new work by Graham Collier based on Lowry's "Under the Volcano".

Preliminary programme now ready—for details please send S.A.E. to:

THE FESTIVAL OFFICE, ILKLEY LS29 8HF, WEST YORKSHIRE

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22 April-28 May
This year includes
THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
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SEMPRINI & THE BRITISH CONCERT ORCHESTRA
Conductor: Vilem Tausky
TELFEX '77: Telford's Industrial Exhibition
'UNDER MILK WOOD'
THE STAN TRACEY QUARTET with DONALD HOUSTON
THE BLACK DYKE MILLS BAND
Conductor: Roy Newsome
LT. COL. JOHN BLASHFORD-SNELL Lecture
'The Conquest of the Blue Nile'
THE WATERSONS in concert
'THE HOLLOW CROWN' with PRUNELLA SCALES and Star cast
THE TELFORD SINFONIA
Conductor: Christopher Lyndon-Gee
PAUL TORTELIER & MARIA DE LA PAU Finale Recital
Also events run by TELFORD COMMUNITY ARTS, plus Murals, Library Exhibitions, Competitions, etc.
PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATED BY THE WREKIN ARTS ASSOCIATION SUPPORTED BY LOCAL INDUSTRY
Full (free) programme from: Byron Grainger-Jones, Festival Secretary, Malinslee House, Telford
Telephone: Telford 501000 ext. 242.

Harrogate Festival
Festival Director: Clive Wilson
4-17 August 1977
An International Festival of Arts and Sciences
Amongst those appearing are:
Grace Bumbry, James Galway, Joseph Cooper, Alan Hacker, Barry Tuckwell, Marian Montgomery and Richard Rodney Bennett, Morton Feldman and Creative Associates, Melos Quartet of Stuttgart, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish National Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, The Barrow Poets, John Julius Norwich, Dinsdale Landen, Henry Livings, Young Musicians Recitals, Writers' Discussions, Late Night Entertainments, daily events for children.
Details from: **Festival Office, Royal Baths, Harrogate, HG1 2RR (0423) 62303**

LUDLOW FESTIVAL 1977
25 June to 10 July
Ludlow Castle Open Air Theatre
'HENRY V'
Directed by Frederick Proud
27 June – 9 July
2.30 & 8.30
Advanced Bookings commence – 18 May.
Visit or send S.A.E. for full programme.
BOX OFFICE, Castle Square, Ludlow, Salop. Telephone: 0584 2150
Other programmed events: Stephen Bishop-Kovacevich, Christopher Hirons and George Malcolm, London Soloists' Ensemble with The John Bate Choir, Sir Bernard Miles, Steve Race, Jake Thackray, Terry Lightfoot and his Band, Craft Market.

Royal Philharmonic/ New Philharmonia/ Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields/ Nash Ensemble/ Swingle II/ Chilingirian Quartet/ Janet Baker/ Michel Béroff/ James Galway
plus Drama, Ballet, Films, Exhibitions, Cabaret, Tours, Children's Events
27th KING'S LYNN FESTIVAL
22-30 July
Full programme and booking details from:
The King's Lynn Festival Office
King Street
KING'S LYNN
Norfolk PE30 1HA
Tel: (0553) 3578

FIFTY-THIRD HASLEMERE FESTIVAL
Director: **CARL DOLMETSCH, CBE**
Early Music on Instruments of the Period
15th-23rd July 1977
Brochures and Tickets: Haslemere Hall (0428 2161) Surrey.

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Rhymney Valley Arts Festival 1977

16-29 October

Programme includes drama, films, exhibitions (crafts, painting and photographs) and a variety of music including chamber, folk and organ.

Full programme details from:
Entertainments Officer,
Council Offices, Park Road,
Hengoed, Mid Glam. 0443/812241.

NORTH WALES MUSIC FESTIVAL

St. Asaph Cathedral, CLWYD

SEPTEMBER 25th - OCTOBER 1st, 1977

Among the artists taking part are:
Henryk Szeryng, Murray Perahia, Cristina Ortiz, Heather Harper, Helen Field, Gillian Weir, Aeolian Quartet, B.B.C. Welsh Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Halle Orchestra.

Also the first public appearance in Wales of
The Bach Choir (David Wilcocks)

For full programme and booking details, please send s.a.e. to:
NORTH WALES MUSIC FESTIVAL OFFICE,
HIGH STREET, ST. ASAPH,
CLWYD.

Flanders Festival (Belgium)

Summer 1977

Bruges July 28 – August 12

Harpsichord Week: competition, exhibits and concerts
J. S. Bach and his contemporaries: concerts

Ghent, Brussels, Leuven, Antwerp
August 25 – September 28

Orchestral concerts, chamber music, ballet, song recitals, summer course on baroque and rococo music, opera

Full programme details available from: **The Flanders Festival, August Reyerslaan 52, 1040 Brussels, tel. 02/735.19.97**

PITLOCHRY Festival Theatre

Directed by Kenneth Ireland

27th Season: April 23 - October 1 1977
Evenings 8.00; Matinees (W. & S.) 2.15

Drama — BRIEF GLORY (R. J. B. Sellar)
RELATIVELY SPEAKING (Ayckbourn)
OUR KINDNESS TO 5 PERSONS (Gallacher)
THE PERCH (Wm Douglas Home) premiere
CYRANO DE BERGERAC (Rostand)

Music — PAUL BADURA-SKODA, JEREMY MENUHIN, AHRENSBURG YOUTH ORCHESTRA plus Evenings of Lehar, Novello etc.

Art Exhibitions * Restaurant (open 6.30)
Send stamp for programme and hotel list. Tel: Pitlochry (0796) 2680.

SUPPORT OUR NEW THEATRE APPEAL !

While smaller and more parochial the folk festivals are unique in providing an atmosphere which retains part of the true meaning of the word 'festival': something else goes on beyond the promotion of new albums and the generation of profits for promoters, managers and stars. They possess a spontaneity and enthusiasm that has been lost in the over-programmed mega-festivals which have become a little too much like the mass rallies of Nazi Germany. Let us hope, anyway, that this does not prevent Princess Anne from enjoying the avalanche of decibels that will greet her on her Jubilee visit to the massive Wembley rock concert in June.

Alan Blyth

Festival Trot

The true festival buff, mythical fellow maybe, has an insatiable appetite for opera, a pocket filled with all the most coveted currencies, and a summer free from all other commitments. Such a one is in for as rich and exciting a feast as ever this year. He would probably begin in this country at Glyndebourne (31 May-7 August) for the opening night, the first performance of Peter Hall's new production of *Don Giovanni*, conducted by John Pritchard. He might arrive back breathlessly from the Continent on 29 June to pick up the opening night at Glyndebourne of that operatic rarity, Richard Strauss's *Die schweigsame Frau* (The Silent Woman) in John Cox's production designed by Michael Annals.

In the meantime the festival-hopper would have made his way to the beautiful rococo theatre at Drottningholm to the festival there (22 May-22 September) to catch Elisabeth Söderström as Monteverdi's Poppaea, or else to Florence (5 May-1 July) for the premiere of Berio's *Opera* and *Laborintus II*, possibly staying on to see the first night of *Salome* (21 June) with Gwyneth Jones in the title role and conducted by Zubin Mehta, and von Einem's *Kabale und Liebe* (23 June), based on Schiller and produced by Vienna's Otto Schenk. There would also be time to drop off at Scheveningen or Amsterdam to catch the premiere (10 June) of a new Dutch opera,

Winchester Summer Festival Concerts and Music Course 1977

August 6th-12th

Details of concerts and accommodation available.

Secretary, Concordia Enterprises, 52 Ravensdale Ave, London N12 9HT. 01-445 7891
S.A.E.

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St Albans
28 June-9 July 1977
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For details write to:
Box Office, The Abbey, St Albans, Herts.

BATH FESTIVAL 1977
3 - 12 June
28th international festival of music and arts.
Brochure and booking form (9p in stamps) from
Bath Festival Office, Linley House, 1 Pierrepont Place, Bath BA1 1JY.

ENGLISH BACH FESTIVAL
'Most exciting of all our Festivals'
24 April - 23 May
Brochure from:
15 South Eaton Place, London SW1 (s.a.e.)

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Full programme from: Barton Cottage, The Street, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

LONDON CHANTICLEER ORCHESTRA
and
London Repertoire Orchestra
CONDUCTOR:
DR RUTH GIPPS
Next Concert: 19th June
(01-660 6278 for details)

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Axel, by Reinbert de Leeuw and Jan van Vlijmen at the Holland Festival (1-23 June).

As a respite from opera the traveller might make the pilgrimage to Aldeburgh (10-26 June), where there are such enticements as Murray Perahia playing Mozart, Clifford Curzon in recital, Pears and Perahia giving Debussy, Britten and Schumann, and Janet Baker and John Shirley-Quirk singing the whole of Hugo Wolf's Italian Songbook. Bath (3-12 June) is an equally attractive venue, and it offers a goodly portion of modern British music – the influence, no doubt, of Sir William Glock – including a miniature festival of the works of John Tavener. While Aldeburgh gives us a glorious retrospective of the past, Bath seeks out the masters of the future.

Our imaginary tourist will have to gird us his loins during July if he wants to take in all the attractions. First stop would probably be Munich (10 July-3 August), where the festival opens with perhaps the season's most sought-after rarity, Richard Strauss's *Daphne*. Then it's over to Aix-en-Provence (15 July-8 August) for a British-orientated new production of *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Charles Mackerras, followed by Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* (more English influence) with a starry cast headed by Montserrat Caballé as Elizabeth I, Grace Bumbry and José Carreras. The strong-minded might stay on for Stockhausen's *Sirius*, a premiere, on the last day.

The loyal Briton and/or Wagnerite will, of course, have booked his seat at Bayreuth (23 July-26 August), where Colin Davis makes his debut at the house in a revival of Götz Friedrich's production of *Tannhäuser*. The controversial Chéreau staging of the *Ring*, conducted by Pierre Boulez, returns for three cycles in spite of the protests of most of the regulars last year and the reported rebellion of half the orchestra. Away from all this serious, Teuton music-making a journey across the Alps will take the festival-goer to the huge Arena at Verona (14 July-28 August) where the season opens with a revival of Gounod's seldom-heard *Roméo et Juliette*, a delectable opera, which is followed by the inevitable *Aida*, elephants and all. A much more esoteric festival has recently been inaugurated at the cloisters at Batignano (27 July-4 August), near Grosseto, by the British designer Adam Pollock. A kind of Glyndebourne in Italian surroundings, it features mainly British artists. Patrick Libby produces Haydn's *Lo speziale* there this year, and Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* completes the fare.

If a rather more bracing climate is needed, the enthusiast might

Cambridge Festival 16 July to 31 July

SILVER JUBILEE YEAR

Two weeks of Music, Drama, Dancing, Feasting & Exhibitions.

Among those appearing: The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields; George Malcolm; Gabrieli String Quartet; James Galway and The Cambridge Symphony Orchestra; King's College Choir and the Orchestra of St. John's, Smith Square; John Lill.

Full programme details from The Festival Administrator, Kett House, Station Road, Cambridge. PLEASE SEND S.A.E. [6¾" × 9"].

Box Office, Central Library, Lion Yard, Cambridge. Tel 57851. Postal bookings from 30th May 1977. Personal bookings from 8th June 1977.

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biggest Festival, now into our fifteenth year, and preparing for Festival 77 running from 10-26 November. Surrounded by parks, gardens and **Belfast's Queens University** we offer a huge range of events including drama, films, exhibitions, poetry, late night entertainments and every kind of music from classical and operatic to folk and jazz. International artists of all sorts join us each year. Coming from America, Paris, Zagreb, Vienna to join many others from Ireland and Britain. We also have a very lively fringe, a very popular late night club and our own Festival restaurant.

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Full details from Miss B. E. Gregory, Ling Lea, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey (Frensham 2677). Stamp please.

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1-10 July 1977

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'FESTIVALS IN GREAT BRITAIN'

A list of festivals in Great Britain in 1977, with dates and addresses for further information. Forecast dates also given for 1978 and beyond, where known.

Obtainable for 40p (55p by post in UK, 65p elsewhere) from **Arts Council Shop, 28 Sackville Street, London W1X 1DA.**

THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

3rd BRACKNELL **JAZZ FESTIVAL JULY 23-24**

THE GARY BURTON QUARTET. GATEWAY (John Abercrombie, Dave Holland, Jack de Johnette). STAN TRACEY OCTET. Elton Dean's NINESENSE. BOBBY BRADFORD QUARTET. CHARLES AUSTIN/JOE GALLIVAN. KEITH INGHAM/SUSANNAH McCORKLE/WILL GAINES. Lennie Best Quartet and many more still to be announced.

Further details from:

SOUTH HILL PARK
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make his way to the far north to Savonlinna (10-31 July) in the midst of the Finnish lakes. Kokkonen's *The Last Temptations* and Sallinen's *The Horseman*, are reportedly well worth the journey on their own account, and the festival's leading spirit, the bass Martti Talvela, can again be heard as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*. After that, when the appetite may well be jaded, it will take something very special to stimulate it again. That is being provided this year at Edinburgh (21 August-10 September), where besides the usual feast of concerts, Peter Diamand, soon to retire as director, has assembled Teresa Berganza, Placido Domingo, Mirrella Freni and Tom Krause under Claudio Abbado's baton for a *Carmen* of unusual appeal. For the more inquiring mind there is the premiere of Thea Musgrave's new opera *Mary Queen of Scots*.

The less ambitious person will not do badly if he confines his festival-going to these shores. Besides those festivals in Britain of international standing already mentioned, there are several others well worth visiting. Pitlochry, at present making an appeal for funds for a new theatre, has a play festival from April to September with a very wide repertory. Pershore in the West Midlands runs a mixed festival at the end of June: it has existed for 17 years. Stour (3-10 July), in East Kent, run by the Dellers, specialises in early music. Cheltenham (1-10 July), in its 33rd year, features some new music, as usual, but also a great deal of Beethoven. King's Lynn (22-30 July) has the Silver Jubilee as a theme and has captured Dame Janet Baker, James Galway and Michael Beroff for solo recitals. Brighton (5-17 July), with a smart idea for the Jubilee, concentrates on the world of the under-25s, with music written by composers who were or are under that age at the time of writing. Chichester (7-20 July), with the cathedral as the main setting, boxes the compass from Dame Janet to Action Space. Fishguard (23-30 July) has a new opera for children, *What the Old Man Does Is Always Right*, by Alun Hoddinott, with Sir Geraint Evans in a principal role. Finally a word of welcome to the new Malvern Festival (23 May-12 June), recalling the glories of the place's two favourite sons, Elgar and Shaw.

Newcastle Festival
17 June - 3 July
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BILLY CONNOLLY
NEW PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
ELIZABETH SCHWARZKOPF
HUMPHREY LYTTELTON
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THE LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS
AND MUCH MORE
Full details and brochure from Newcastle Festival Office, 7 Saville Place (entrance off College Street), Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 9DQ.

31st Stroud Festival
8th — 22nd October 1977
EXHIBITIONS ● DRAMA ● MUSIC ● POETRY
PUPPETS ● BALLET
Information from :
The Secretary, 78 Middle Street, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1EA
INTERNATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION | INTERNATIONAL SCRIPT COMPETITION
Closing Date 30th June 1977
S.A.E. for Entry Form from:
Mr. D. L. Worsfield, Shepherds Hoe, Rodborough Common, Stroud, Glos. GL5 5BN
Mr. C. L. Brooks, Coppers, Blueboys Park, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Glos.

A Music Party for May Day
presented by
The Musicians' Union/Labour Party
BOWLES BROTHERS BAND - NEIL ARDLEY'S KALEIDOSCOPE OF RAINBOWS - LONDON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA - SIMON RATTLE - Leslie Pearson & Michael Reeves - Jenny Short - BERNARD MILES.
Sunday 1 May, Mermaid Theatre, 7.30 p.m.
Tickets (all £1.25) at door or Transport House (01-834 9434).

PORTSMOUTH FESTIVAL
20-29 MAY 1977
Artistic Director: David Laing
Artists include:
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Full details from:
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Benedict Nightingale

Only When We Laugh

Sextet *Criterion*
Just Between Ourselves *Queens*
Curse of the Starving Class *Royal Court*
Abigail's Party *Hampstead*

If you want to understand why Alan Ayckbourn has become a critical as well as a commercial success, call in at the Criterion and let your juices ingest something called *Sextet*. It is a comedy, so-called, set on a yacht, a sort of floating bordello that spends the evening meandering, like the plot, between Monte Carlo and St Tropez. The owner is 'Britain's biggest advertising wizard', and the principal guest a playwright who works out his passage with such quips as 'men get the change of life, too – that's why the call it the menopause and not the womenopause'. This gentleman is, of course, played by Leslie Phillips, an actor whose forte is the caddish smirk, the winning ogle, and all the other accoutrements of middle-aged boyishness. His obsession, unsurprisingly, is sex, and how and where to get it; and get it he does with what the falling curtain coyly suggests may be two women at once. This, just after it has been revealed, with due pathos, that the seedy charmer is actually rather a sad sort, and really loves the nice, plain wife he's left back in Hampstead. Is it a wonder that a reviewer should turn from such stuff to Ayckbourn with a thirsty joy, like an Ancient Mariner who has found a cask of claret bobbing among the 20th-century effluent?

But then we know all that already. We know that Ayckbourn has brought intelligence and point to that most derelict of genres, the Shaftesbury Avenue 'farcical comedy'. We know that he takes a strange delight in making things difficult for himself, for instance by setting each act in a different kitchen on a consecutive Christmas Eve, as in his *Absurd Person Singular*, and devoting the second and funniest to someone's frantic attempts to commit suicide. We know he takes risks, with both his form and his subject-matter, that are surprising by the standards of the West End. We've got accustomed to thinking of him as the virtuoso of suburban misery, the one who weaves cadenzas out of people's tottering marriages and domestic ennui, the Paganini of Carshalton or the Liszt of Staines. But old doubts gnaw at the back of the head. Could we be overrating Ayckbourn because of the dimness of most of the competition? Does his peculiar blend of technical ingenuity and disastrous event really take us very far – or very deep? Can his characters feel pain, and can he?

Just Between Ourselves is his most forthright riposte to date. No need, by now, to be impressed because it's set in and beside a garage on four of the characters' birthdays, no reason to be surprised that the celebrations are less than gleeful. How could they be, in the crazy-paved heartland of do-it-yourself and do-in-yourself? Both of the husbands on offer believe neglect to be the natural order of wedlock. Neil's sexual sloth is driving Pam to exasperation and the bottle, and still worse awaits Vera, the half-comprehending victim of Dennis's genial imperviousness to everything and everyone except his Black and Decker and his aging mum. For the first two acts she suffers from what her husband calls 'nerves', meaning her edgy reaction to his habit of exiling himself in his playroom and leaving her with a mother-in-law who, like him, enjoys patronising her as clumsy and incompetent. In Act Three she timidly asks Dennis for 'help', a request he assumes to be directed at his workbench, and before long she's pursuing his mother with an electric sandpaperer, bawling 'you rotten old toad'. And so to Act Four, which leaves Vera in a catatonic stupor, slumped on a deckchair, a pretty bleak sight.

Several of Ayckbourn's plays have involved insensitivity, lack of consideration, the destructive power of the glad hand and big, vacant grin; but this is the first to have evolved into a Laingian case-history, with two members of a seemingly normal family in unacknowledged collusion against a third. It is the mother-in-law joke taken far beyond the usual punchline, a shaggy cliché reclaimed for reality. All along Ayckbourn insists on the logic of his situation, whether it provokes laughter or distaste or an odd, unsettling mixture of both. Thus Vera's shattered confidence leads her to drop the tea and douse the guests, which is funny. That in turn destroys her confidence still more, which is not funny. Again, few things are funnier in the theatre than mutual misunderstanding, two puzzled people talking at cross purposes, and yet nothing is less funny when it's clear that the consequences may be despair and insanity. And so we come, once again, to that last image, not at all what one expects from a 'comic' playwright: Vera speechless and motionless while her persecutors hover solicitously over her, assuring themselves she's getting better: funny, and not the least funny.

A poorer dramatist would either have trivialised the situation by ignoring its pain, or have ended by wringing his hands over it. Not many would ask for two contradictory reactions at the same time, leaving me, at least, unsure whether the side of my mouth was turned up or down. What Ayckbourn does is deepen his audience's laughter, and I don't think that could be achieved by a writer whose attitude to people was, as has sometimes been alleged against him, amoral or callous. On the contrary, this seems to me a pretty humane piece, an opinion confirmed by the present performers, and not just those playing the more sympathetic parts.

As Colin Blakely makes heartily clear, even the dreadful Dennis suffers from nothing much worse than ignorance. He means well, or thinks he does, but sees little, least of all himself and his mother – played by Constance Chapman as a homely old body, everyone's clockwork gran: wind her up, and she'll grumble, gossip, make tea, and guilelessly trample all over her daughter-in-law's nerves. She's at once absolutely ordinary and literally maddening, a frumpy vampire. At the end Miss Chapman, whom anno domini had begun to wither into a scrunched-up handbag, becomes all pink and shining, as if Vera's illness were a blood transfusion for her, which in a way it is, since she can now wield power without competition or guilt. It is this sort of touch that gives the play its awful plausibility and, perhaps, its distinction. *Just Between Ourselves* may not be the masterpiece Ayckbourn will one day offer us, a quasi-comic re-run of *Lear* set in Selsdon, with each act occurring in a chintz-covered eye-socket on successive All Fools Days. But it is an unmistakable step towards that probable end.

You'll remember Sam Shepard as the author of *Unseen Hand* and *Tooth of Crime*, a young American whose imagination sprawls across page and stage, though sometimes rather like spilled ink. *Curse of the Starving Class* isn't one of his obscurer pieces, but it is not one of his more original, either. There are, I think, three levels to it, none exactly unfamiliar to those used to travelling by elevator through American drama. The basement belongs to the family, that self-devouring institution: alienated kids, embittered mother, a father who veers disconcertingly from loutish drunk to Mr Clean, ever-ready with paternal advice. On the first floor dreams are disintegrating, rural innocence being destroyed by the city con-men, who come to cheat the family out of their run-down farm. And in the attic something suitably lofty and emblematic is going on, if we're to judge by the references to American eagles eating testicles or being devoured by rampaging cats. It is all crammed together in Shepard's punchy, sardonic style, and acted with some swagger by Dudley Sutton, Annette Crosbie and others; but it left me feeling oddly uninvolved, as if I'd intruded on someone obsessively scrubbing himself with pumice in the bath. We English have our black marks, too, but slightly different ones.

Several are on show in *Abigail's Party*, which convicts the residents of a London estate of greed, snobbery, envy, stupidity, cruelty, a sly lechery and much else. This has been 'devised and directed' by Mike Leigh, and it's often very funny and observant: we, too, feel trapped beside that dismal coffee table, on that grisly leather sofa, in that shoddy-smart room. All the same, isn't there something, anything, to be said for these people and their chosen life-styles? As it is, little is allowed to impede the swelling flood of bile. Ayckbourn, God speed him, would have been more balanced and forgiving.

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Films

John Coleman

Devil Take It

The Sentinel *Plaza*
21 Hours at Munich *ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Bayswater and Fulham Road*
Seven Beauties *Curzon*
Five Women Around Utamaro *ICA Cinema Club from 2 May*
Throw Away Your Books, Let's Go Into the Streets *Electric, Portobello Road*

The best film I have seen since last communicating with you is, by a rickshaw mile, the Mizoguchi at the ICA. So why not lead with it? The answer is geography: how many of you loyal fans are within even bus distance of the Mall, London, England? The counter to this, often enough expressed by people eager to distribute and show films unlikely to spell home-run or indeed any kind of run at all in extra-metropolitan cities and hamlets, would go – chance it, anyway; the NS is a special case, a bit like the posh Sundays and dailies; if reviewers in such slots fail to promote their preferences, then who is going to pick them up for display outside London? And the response to *that* is: I wish we had the power, with the not inconsiderable further defence that – at a guess – it still makes journalistic sense to read the news, however bad, about movies that will probably pass your way than to do anything so sustained as to plug the week's good cause. Of course, more than once in a while, this column will spread itself on a Satyajit Ray or a freak first from Jamaica: it simply feels, from where I sit, impolitic to make it a steady point of order, or ordering. I have been mildly stung to this spasm of scratching by a friend's remark, roughly, 'who does he think he writes for?' and encouraged to air the resulting itch by the comprehensive lousiness of what I have to write about. There are never words to spare, but maybe this once. Having trapped oneself somewhere between a moan and a manifesto, one will now resume normal business.

There's no ghoul like an old ghoul and the Devil is currently riding high at the box-office, what with *The Omen* breaking all US records for '76 (part two is in the making) and possession being fully nine points of the law of returns ever since *The Exorcist* gave us the up-chucking works. One of our brasher exports, Michael Winner, has predictably turned to a dabble in diabolism, again contrived to get such attention-holding film-persons as Ava Gardner, Burgess Meredith, Arthur Kennedy, Eli Wallach, Sylvia Miles and Martin Balsam to do something more than yawn-throughs in subsidiary roles, and come up with *The Sentinel*, the eggshell plot of which I do not propose to crack. It is really quite a neat, handsome and sub-acid job before it has to move to a resolution packed with monsters out of *Freaks*. The major presence felt behind it is *Rosemary's Baby*, which it shamelessly echoes in a spooky party, some clammy instant neighbours to the model-girl heroine (Cristina Raines) who has moved into a weird new-old apartment, her lawyer-lover (Chris Sarandon) so bland as to be Cassavetes-sinister. It is, in fact, sustaining enough for a while – with excellent gimmicks like a book the model sees as having identical pages in Latin while her plastic fiancé only finds English, Meredith coming silkily on with a cat and a yellow parakeet rather like Noël Coward in *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (the unstoppable intruder), a crazy polka and a shrewd glance at top-modelling; Miss Gardner utters nicely as a snobbish house-agent, looking plumply gorgeous; Mr Wallach has a few excellent lines in his undeveloped part as a smiley, suspicious cop. But the clerics, for all that they save the day in a manner of morality, are made out of cheaper cloth. Winner, no fool, knows that the kind of audience attracted by this kind of nonsense wants Old Nick to win, too (*vide* the close of *The Omen*). Allowing for the model's fate, in contemporary materialistic terms, he does. I wish this God's gift to a genre – prime-time silliness – would stop. In a sense, it has to be His fault. Sorry, believers.

With *21 Hours at Munich* we are back in the mad, real world of Entebbe, Israeli hostages, what happened during the 1972 Munich Olympics. Since one knows the outcome beforehand, this can hardly be called a thriller. If anywhere, it belongs – one conceives – to the current disaster cycle. Yet that doesn't meet the case, either. The odd helicopter goes up in flames and a few bodies are shot to bits, but that is still at a remove from the big-screen damages of *The Towering Inferno* or *Earthquake*. There is an obvious built-in spectatorship for any film in which Jews are seen to suffer once more and that is to be found among Jews themselves: going to such re-enactments may well be in part an act of piety and New York, at least, will furnish a formidable turn-out. (I am aware that to use the word Jew, let alone ascribe any particular modes of behaviour to those proudly living under the nomenclature, is to lay oneself open to the charge of anti-semitism. Before anyone writes in, I should warn that thereby I must hate Arabs as well. Farewell to that pussy-footing, which is on a par with falling over blackwards.) There has to be, in the clouded minds of the men who back films like *21 Hours*, a larger rationale, because the thing itself is bound to be both boring in the long run and fibbing (not that the inevitable distortion of truth would cause much concern among backers) in the short one. However closely the facts are hewn to, falsities will abound. This was my objection to the hugely-lauded *All The President's Men*, and the attention paid here to unearthing look-alikes for Golda Meir, Avery Brundage (including a pretty remarkable impersonation of Willy Brandt by Richard Basehart) and other personalities is not going to alter this knowledge that we are witnessing buggered-about recent history. I think that possibly it is the sheer logistics of these 'disaster' movies, which might better be called 'rescue' or 'attempted-rescue' movies, that hauls the ticket-purchasers: something akin to playing with toy soldiers or war-gaming without the effort. Shirley Knight, as a crucial intermediary, member of the Women's Olympic Security Service, preserves a cosmetic cool throughout long hours of agony: she is emblematic of the overall treatment of a very bad scene indeed.

Lina Wertmuller, a long time ago, made a fine small affair called *The Lizards*, which had its echoes of Fellini's *I Vitelloni*, being about small-town layabouts at the loosest of ends, and was not so surprisingly reminiscent of Fellini since she had worked for him. Her *Seven Beauties* – some four films on – has been fantastically welcomed in the smarter bits of the States and looks like shouting, gesticulating, postured rubbish to me. A pretty pre-war crook deserts from the Italian army, is picked up by the Germans, lands in a concentration camp, survives by improbably and ignobly seducing the gigantesque female camp commandant. He returns home to find his sisters all whores, etc. Bloated images where something suppler might have been worked. Mizoguchi's *Five Women Around Utamaro* is the first he was allowed to make after the war. It is centred around the 'floating world' of Japanese sexuality, epitomised in the real-life Utamaro Kitagawa (1754-1806), who produced fantastic colour prints of professional beauties, and spells out its complex tale of interwoven alliances and dallyings with the confidence of an old master of cinema: not a flash framing in sight. *Throw Away Your Books, Let's Go Into the Streets* is post-Godard Japanese, made with the sort of disorder some find rewarding, overladen with shock-visuals, punctuated with Brecht-Weill songs. Talented. Take a chance and go.

Television

Ian Hamilton

Like a Trouper

'Marmalade, frigging marmalade!' 'Don't *say* frigging!' 'Why not?' 'Frigging is a euphemism. If you can't bring yourself to cuss properly you shouldn't cuss at all!' It seemed a little severe to have a character in Charles Wood's *Don't Forget to Write* (BBC-2) upbraided in these terms, since the poor fellow wouldn't have been allowed to cuss 'properly' even if he'd wanted to. But the exchange was thoroughly typical of the remote theatricality of this new made-for-TV series. The subject: selling out.

It is becoming a sure sign of a prestige drama production that the actors should pretend not to know that they're on telly, and here both George Cole, as a playwright forced to write bad films for cash, and Gwen Watford as his rattled wife were ridiculously trouper-like in their determination to be heard clearly at the back. Exits and entrances were managed with gratified precision, as if the performers were anxious that we shouldn't be tricked by the new

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medium into believing that there was anything *behind* those doors. And movements from A to B were contrived with such controlled stylishness that you could almost see the chalk marks on the floor. Similarly, the absence of canned laughter made one wonder if the real point about canned laughter is not that it is meant to make *us* laugh too, but that it makes *them* think they're doing well.

Almost enough to make you laugh, but in fact laughs were few and far between. The artificiality of the production afflicted the sinews of both dialogue and situation: beneath the mannered literacy of the conversation and the coincidence-stormed machinations of the plot, one could easily detect the steady, heart-felt moan of an author who thought he oughtn't to have ended up like this. Since this was the avowed subject, lightness of touch was the last thing to expect. The George Cole character was working on an epic called *Thundering Hooves*; Charles Wood wrote the script for *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. George Cole is harassed by an American student writing a book on *Minor British Playwrights*; Charles Wood is a minor British playwright. All very well to write of what you know, but Wood's attitude to writing for television (that you can get away with murder) was no more elevated, so far as one could tell, than that of Cole to writing films. Hence, the sorrowing, guilt-stained moments were more embarrassing to watch than the up-market Whitehall farce. Some writers, it should be urged, are better at selling out than at hanging on to what they've got.

Inside Story (BBC-2) has lately been turning its lugubrious gaze upon the difficulties of wives whose hubbies are in stir. The first in their three-part series featured a wife waiting for her man's sentence to be decided ('Do you *want* him to come home?' 'Aren't you relieved at all?'), and the second focused on a post-conviction set-up. Next week, I gather, it's to be Release. So far, part two was more depressing than part one. Lorraine was discovered in hospital, having just given birth to her third child. She had recently recovered from a cancer operation. Husband Steve was serving two-and-a-half years for raping 'another woman'. The camera gave us a clear view of Lorraine's vocal chords as she rambled on about how rotten things were; after a bit, it seemed the decent thing to look away. Later, she was back at home reconstructing the events that led up to Steve's arrest; at first, she'd been a bit put out by the type of crime he'd chosen but later he had made her understand that it was all the other woman's fault. Lacking a quick look at Steve, we couldn't be sure how to take this. Lorraine's daughters (by a previous marriage) helped a bit by confessing that they had been worried that Steve might one day turn his lusting eye on them. 'But you don't feel that any more, do you . . . now that I've explained, like.' No, they didn't feel that any more.

The inert receptivity of programmes like *Inside Story* can after a time look like simple mindlessness. Granada's *World In Action* essay on the 4,000 children (between 10 and 17) who are remanded in 'Prison authority establishments' had just as much slice-of-life acumen, but it took the trouble to weigh up the real prospects of finding somewhere else to put these unruly, sometimes dangerous, delinquents. And it pointed out also that the idea behind this type of remand is essentially humane; it's meant to pre-empt juvenile court appearances – ironic that in some cases the kids thus end up having a clean record and a worse time.

Line of the week: from her Majesty in *Royal Heritage* (BBC-1) as she ushered foreign dignitaries into a vast room dripping with Rembrandts, Leonardo drawings and the like (apologetically) – 'We've just redecorated here . . . ' At least she didn't say, 'You must excuse the mess'.

Art

John Spurling

Roman Hoards

Wealth of the Roman World *British Museum*
This Brilliant Year *Royal Academy*

Two long golden banners hanging down between the pillars of the British Museum portico announce its latest special exhibition. The press handout invokes Tutankhamun, whose name is now as synonymous with clicking turnstiles and dogged queues as with the splendour that was Egypt. *Wealth of the Roman World* is perhaps a misleading title, meaning here strictly the gold and silver of the late Roman Empire and its barbarian neighbours, coins, plates, bowls, cups, candlesticks, articles of intrinsic exchange value rather than a display of the full cultural significance of those 400 years from the administrative reforms of Diocletian, through the division of the Empire and the break-up of the Western half into barbarian kingdoms, to the sudden onslaught of Islam at the end of the 7th century.

The exhibition and its catalogue inevitably suffer somewhat from stimulating one's interest in this Gibbonian sweep of history and satisfying it only through the partial and haphazard evidence of the treasure which wealthy and hard-pressed persons, ignoring and at the same time illustrating the truth of Christ's injunction, laid up for themselves in the earth and were never able to retrieve. Nonetheless, if it is not quite the grandeur or the ruin that was Rome, it is an impressive display, including important loans from abroad, of the solid material affluence and the high level of craft which persisted through the misnamed Dark Ages, in truth a period when the city of Rome itself had already ceased to count for much except as a symbol and the invading hordes came not to destroy civilisation but to share it.

We owe many of the finest things in the show to the imperial citizens' understandable reluctance to let them. The Water Newton Hoard of early Christian silver, now on public view for the first time since its discovery (by plough) two years ago, was buried in 350 at a time when the Roman army had lost control of Britain. The Mildenhall Treasure, including the famous great dish decorated with nereids and marine creatures, maenads and satyrs, was hidden at about the same time and may have belonged to Lupicinus, a Christian general sent to cope with the Picts and Scots but who later fell foul of Julian the Apostate. Projecta, the friend of St Jerome's patron Pope Damasus, probably buried her elaborately embossed marriage caskets on the Esquiline Hill when Alaric sacked Rome in 410. The magnificent set of nine silver plates depicting scenes from the life of David and perhaps commissioned by the Emperor Heraclius to celebrate his victory over the rival Persian Empire was found in a wall in Cyprus in 1902 and had been there since the Arabs, scourge of Romans and Persians alike besieged and took the rich Byzantine city of Lambousa in 654.

Other treasures in the exhibition were, more likely, sacrifices to internal divisions. The beautiful plain silver bowls of the Munich Treasure had belonged to somebody caught up in the civil war by which Constantine overturned Diocletian's four-emperor arrangement and made himself sole ruler. The silver tableware found at Carthage and inscribed with the name of the prominent local family for which it was made could have been hidden either when the Vandals swept into Africa or when the family supported St Augustine in his violent struggle against the Donatists. Keen Catholics they may have been, but the Cresconii's large chased bowl is decorated round the rim with reclining shepherds, sheep, goats and dogs, soft pastoral motifs from Virgil rather than hard parables from the New Testament.

As for the barbarians themselves, though they minted their own coins in the captured provinces of the West, they often preferred to retain the head of the reigning Eastern emperor as a guarantee of financial respectability. Odovacar the Vandal, deposer of the last Western emperor in about 476, had the self-confidence to mint his own head and by the next century Totila the Ostrogoth and Theodobert, King of the Merovingians, were following his example. Our own King Raedwald of the East Angles, if it was indeed he that was buried at Sutton Hoo in 625/6, owned many fine pieces of Byzantine silver, as well as locally made jewellery, a Scandinavian helmet and shield and a sceptre which is Byzantine in concept but Celtic and Germanic in style. The coins in his gold and jewelled purse were all of continental barbarian mintage and intended to pay for his oarsmen's crossing of the Styx. In that at least he seems a nearer heir to ancient Rome than the Emperor Heraclius who marked his defeat of the Persians the year after Raedwald's death not with a Roman triumph but a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The idea of celebrating the jubilee of Raedwald's successor Elizabeth II by re-celebrating Victoria's jubilee seems eccentric. Rather than disinter a very dull collection of Victorian royal paintings, busts and other bits and pieces, including a cast of Victoria's hand and the sailor-suit worn by Edward VIII when a boy, it would surely have been more suitable for the Royal Academy

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to have mounted an exhibition of British painting and sculpture from the last 25 years. The thought must have occurred to somebody and been rejected, since the best part of this show is its appendage, a selection from the Fine Art Section of the Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887, 'works produced in the United Kingdom during the reign of Her Majesty The Queen'. All are more or less narrative paintings, including a Turner and a fine Orchardson in browns, greens and yellows of an incompatible married couple seated at either end of the long dining-table, the butler deferentially intruding. Arthur Hughes's tearful *April Love* is there and I recommend particularly William Shakespeare Burton's *The Wounded Cavalier* and Charles William Mitchell's *Hypatia*, the powerful naked figure of the celebrated 4th-century mathematician and Neoplatonist backed against an altar and about to be murdered with oyster-shells by a mob of Christian fanatics and Nitrian monks.

Tour

David Harsent

Humber Follies

To Hull for the Arts Council. A Writers' Tour, together with Mustapha Matura, Sheila MacLeod and David Benedictus. My second tour; and I worry that a week of schools and public readings may confirm what I already suspect: that audiences are well-meaning, respectful and basically don't give a shit. A week, though, during which I can be solely poet, leaving behind the cut and bludgeon of commercial publishing. That's what I tell myself.

At King's Cross I spot a guy wearing a blue suit and sneakers, attempting to turn aside the wrath of a zealous BR official who obviously sees, in the orderliness of queues, an example of the doggedness and innate sense of justice that brought the Hun to his knees. The rebel's soft, well-modulated voice penetrates the blare of tannoy announcements. David Benedictus? Slouching to the back of the queue, I find I'm standing behind Paul Jones; had I checked efficiently on my fellow writers, I'd have identified the lady next to him as Sheila MacLeod, his wife.

The train's bar is packed before the last carriage has cleared the platform. Things blur with a sweet progression: the suburbs, the countryside, the features of the Scottish engineer who is trying to outdrink me. From time to time a dusky gent with a ferocious moustache passes through the bar bearing cans of lager. It has to be Mustapha Matura . . . but the Scots engineer has forgotten the chasers and has to be set straight about that, so the chance to blow all this anonymity passes. Almost by chance, I arrive in Hull, having, apparently, changed trains at Doncaster. There has been a strange warp in time. I go through the barrier in an ungainly, but speedy, crouch and return from underground to find a posse of two from Humberside Arts rounding up the rebel, the moustache and Sheila MacLeod.

By the time we assemble in the Area Centre some three hours later, in order to meet the teachers who have asked to have us in their schools during the week, I am in considerable need of something to restart my heart. Three teachers front in the course of an hour, one of them the man who, on his official request form, noted that he would like me to lecture on the imagery of Pope, Shakespeare, Wilfred Owen and Hopkins. Over dinner I discover that David Benedictus would like to nationalise pornography in order to fund indigent writers. I promise to give some thought to the notion. The hotel leaks muzak, a ceaseless suppuration. I spend much of the night praying for sleep in a low monotone which does nothing to drown the rhythmic *clunk* of the immovable, unstoppable clock sited some six inches from the bed-head.

Day one offers some greyish omens. One is breakfast; another is Sheila MacLeod's frown as she returns from her first ever trip into a school for her first ever reading in public. Meantime, Mustapha and I are interviewed by Radio Humberside. In a stern voice, the interviewer tells me that poetry is a *personal* thing. I smile and assure her that I'll run the idea through my frontal lobes. David Benedictus, who claims to have been looking forward to a week of school dinners, alights from the Humberside Arts car pale and griped, calculating to the finest degree his chances of getting a bet on the 2.30 at Catterick before nature comes upsides. A man of true pluck, he stays ahead by a length.

The evening reading is at Hollym Village Hall, where the WI awaits. Mustapha reads in dialect, David selects a faintly indecent passage from a novel about voyeurism, Sheila reads some impressive and uncompromisingly complex pages and I zip through a few poems, almost able to see the words disintegrating in the space between myself and the first row. The women of Hollym, not to be outdone, swoop upon us bearing tea and sausage rolls. From the fettered but discernible smile on Charles Osborne's cultured face, I can tell who he thinks has got the better of things. I determine to ponder the implications of this victory.

My bad day comes on Wednesday at the school where I've been asked to do a job on Pope, Hopkins and the rest . . . A vast, poured-concrete hovel standing in a vast, poured-concrete wilderness. The kids appear to be deaf-mutes. After an hour or so of near-palpable apathy, during which time my own rhythms are thoroughly subverted by the long, looping alpha rhythms of my opponents, I am fed a substance called sausage shortcake and driven, by a friendly teacher, to 'a quiet pub on the estate'. Broken glass and teeth crackle underfoot as I approach the bar. Depressing terms like 'cause' and 'effect' begin to assail me. I decide to tinker with the equation at a later date.

I am still tinkering some three days and four schools later, when Douglas Dunn arrives to save me from my social conscience with promises of double malt a mere taxi ride away. Douglas's accounts of his own tour are scandalous and enormously funny. As twilight settles in his drawing room, so the bottle dies and I finally ebb into a cab to arrive back at the hotel.

Days pass, a welter of pale custard and Newcastle brown and eager, amateur faces. More schools – most of them filled with reassuringly bright, sometimes deliciously female, pupils – and some gratifyingly well-attended evening readings, dispelling a few of the doubts and reservations about audiences and their motives. All culminates in a visit to Bridlington – which occasion begins to look distinctly promising when the Chairman refers, in his introduction, to 'this historic moment'. A minute or two later, he points out, for those who can't see, that Paul Jones is looking after his wife's coat. An air of dour and dutiful enjoyment envelops us as we read. As the session ends, the Chairman – to our intense delight – asks the audience to 'thank the speakers in the usual way'. For one ecstatic moment I picture them rising as one to perform some bizarre Northern ritual of gratitude involving black puddings and glottal stops. No such luck; they applaud, then rush to the front to get Paul Jones's autograph.

We drive a dozen or so miles for dinner: to a tiny hamlet consisting of four houses and a sinister, derelict fairground. Barbed wire shrouds the last four feet of the helter-skelter. The restaurant, Luigi's, is large, plush and populated by lean-jawed fellows in lounge suits and women in oyster-coloured satin evening gowns, displaying crisp cleavages. Luigi tells us there has been a run on vintage champagne. On one side, the sea flows beneath a smokey moon; on the other, deserted arable land breeds silences. The food is excellent. The staff must easily outnumber the population of the hamlet. It's a perfect mystery; a perfect finale. We exchange 'phone numbers, smile at one another and flirt with the word 'success'. Luigi arrives bearing the last of the champagne.

Weekend Competition

No. 2461 Set by M. V. Gracechurch

According to *Punch*, there is a book published in the States about how to be an industrial spy. Extracts, please, from *First Steps in Rape*, *A Beginner's Guide to Battery*, and similar dubious handbooks. Up to 200 words, by 13 May.

Result of No 2458 Set by E. O. Parrott

We asked for misleading information for foreign tourists, with particular emphasis on Jubilee gulling.

Report by Ms Prince

Our fault, really, for setting this sort of comp again so soon. There was a perceptible weariness in the way in which even our most loyal competitors incited people to give the Jubilee two-finger greeting, ask for free drinks at a Free House, and date Princess Margaret through an escort agency. Still, keep your republican sentiments well

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honed: we shall be setting a special Jubilee bumper comp in a fortnight. £5 to Sharpless, £4 to each of the rest.

For the Chinese this is the Year of the Snake; for the British it is the Year of the Mug. The Queen's Jubilee is celebrated by the free distribution to all Her Majesty's loyal subjects of:

(1) Portraits showing the Royal mugs.
(2) Mugs showing the Royal portraits.

The latter can be obtained by overseas visitors provided they follow the simple but necessary ritual involved. The procedure is as follows. You go up to any assistant in a shop where these handsome souvenirs are on display and, looking him or her straight in the eye, pronounce these words slowly and clearly,

Jiggity juggernaut
Corgi and pug,
Biggity buggernaut,
I claim this mug.

The assistant will then smile and hand over the mug with a low bow. No payment is made or expected. After bowing in return you run into the street exclaiming, 'I've been mugged! I've been mugged!' whereupon all the passers-by will raise a shout to celebrate your good fortune.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Britain is the Isle of Dogs. They are worshipped there, as cats were in Ancient Egypt and cows are in India. Never use an escalator in the London Underground unless you are carrying a dog in your arms. (You will see a notice to this effect).

Canine faeces are regarded as especially sacred, as they ward off evil spirits. They are never removed from public parks or pavements. It is customary to bow down to dog droppings; the really devout smear the soles of their shoes with them, and then make for the nearest public-house or restaurant.

F. R. VESS

The English Royal Family all have pet names – Captain Mark Phillips, for instance, is affectionately known as 'Dumb-Bum'. Intense interest in the lives and characters of all the 'Royals' is welcome to all true Britons; and it is considered especially polite to enquire why it is that Prince Charles is still unmarried.

You will already doubtless be aware that the Beefeaters at the Tower are unpaid and, like the ducks in St James's Park, rely for provisions on donations from generous passers-by. However, whereas mere 'rankers' may safely be offered ordinary *stewing steak*, only the choicest *rump* or *fillet* should be be offered to the Lord Warden of the Tower.

RUFUS STONE

G. B. Shaw requested in his Will that visitors should kiss his Epstein bust in the National Gallery.

London barbers are delighted to shave patrons' armpits.

To celebrate Jubilee Year, taxis should be hailed by holding up the forefinger and middle finger and wagging them twice to symbolise both the 2 and the 5 (V) of 25. Policemen will also appreciate the gesture.

V. F. CORLEONE

In Jubilee Year many visitors will be coming from what used to be the British Empire. Special parts of such towns as London, Birmingham and Bradford have been allotted them. The European visitor should see these areas, which will be inferior to his own. The Commonwealth visitors will be much comforted by your comments to the effect that they will soon be going home. Wish them bon voyage.

JAMES MORGAN

Tony Miles

Chess

No 31 **Petrosian/Korchnoy**

Undoubtedly the most significant of the first round candidates' matches was the Korchnoy-Petrosian encounter. The two are rated equal second in the world, behind Karpov, on the latest Elo list. In the previous two candidates' series Petrosian beat Korchnoy 1 – 0 with nine draws in 1971, and the result was reversed three years later when Petrosian retired ill when trailing 3 – 1 with one draw. They have been bitter rivals for many years and the bitterness has certainly not been diminished by Korchnoy's recent defection from the Soviet Union.

The first two games were drawn quickly – possibly giving the players' nerves a chance to settle. In the third Petrosian played the opening badly and lost a pawn but Korchnoy failed to exploit his advantage. The fourth was also a draw. The fifth was a scrappy affair. Petrosian blundered away a piece, Korchnoy plundered back some pawns and compensation, but survived to the adjournment with just enough to win. Surprisingly Petrosian struck back immediately. In the next game he gained the advantage from the opening, increased it rapidly and convincingly defeated his rival. The seventh was drawn, but in the eighth Korchnoy won again.

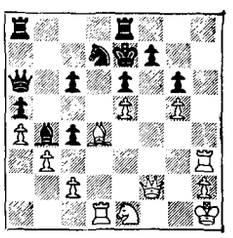
This time Petrosian did not come back. Korchnoy held on to take the match 6½-5½ and a place in the next round against Polugaevsky. The following game, Petrosian's only win, was probably the best of the match.

White: T. Petrosian **Black: V. Korchnoy**

1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. N-KB3, P-Q4; 3. P-B4, P-K3; 4. N-QB3, P-B4; 5. BP x P, N x P; 6. P-K4, N x N; 7. P x N, P x P; 8. P x P, B-N5ch; 9. B-Q2, B x Bch; 10. Q x B, 0-0. This variation seems to occur frequently in important matches: it was also played in the Petrosian-Spassky and Spassky-Fischer world title matches. **11. B-QB4, N-B3; 12. 0-0, P-QN3; 13. KR-K1, B-N2; 14. QR-Q1, N-K2.** This is dubious, black should bring his Rs into play by 14. . . . R-B1. He intends to meet P-Q5 with N-B4-Q3, blockading, but his other pieces are not so well placed. **15. P-Q5, P x P; 16. P x P, N-B4; 17. N-K5! N-Q3; 18. N-B6! B x N; 19. P x B, N x B; 20. Q-B4!** The point. The position simplifies to a major piece ending where white is left with a tremendous passed pawn. Probably it is already winning. **20. . . . N-Q3; 21. R x N, Q-B2; 22. P-N3, P-KR3; 23. Q-K5, QR-B1; 24. Q-Q5, K-R2; 25. R-K4.** Preparing to transfer to the K side. **25. . . . K-N1; 26. K-N2, P-R3; 27. P-KR4, P-QN4; 28. P-N4, K-R2; 29. R-K2, K-R1; 30. P-N5, P-KR4; 31. R-Q2, KR-K1; 32. Q-B3, P-N3; 33. R(2)-Q5, R-B1; 34. R-B6, Q-K2; 35. R-Q7, Q-K1; 36. R x NP, Q-K4** and black resigns.

Problem 31:

White to play. How should the game go? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than Wednesday 11 May.

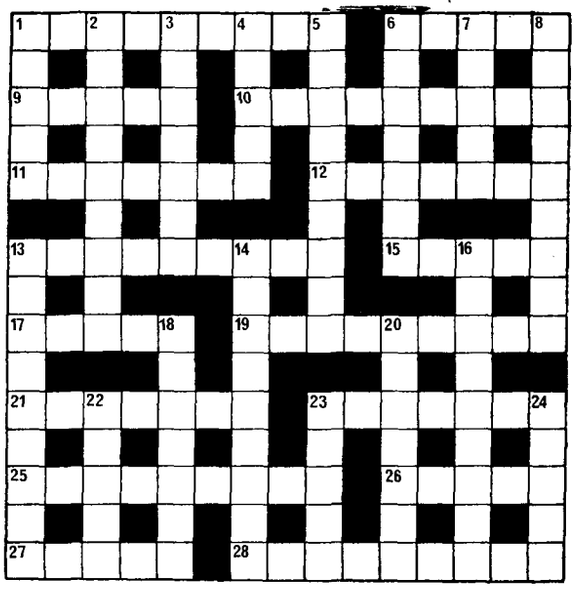


Solution to Problem 29:

1. R x P! Q-K4ch (. . . Q x R; 2. Q x Rch, Q-N1; 3. Q-B6ch); 2. P-B4, Q-Q3; 3. Q-N2ch, Q-Q5; 4. R-B8ch, B-N1; 5. N-N5! Resigns.

Weekend Crossword 1213

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1213, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 10 May.



ACROSS

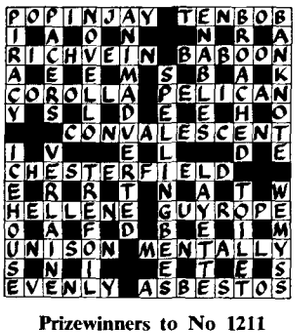
1. Take it before the meal, for exercises during mixed parties (9).
6. One who feels low in seeing them operate (5).
9. Airship for colonel (5).
10. Paris as it appears for people with a rural occupation (9).
11. Town has a crop of good scores (7).
12. Does hit wildly when lifted up (7).
13. Just the place in which to study nothing (9).
15. Ancient who is before long about fifty (5).
17. Dignitary who is right behind the county? (5).
19. The short figure abandons signs of modesty (9).
21. Essay which needs rewriting to make it clear (7).
23. Foot's supporter shows pleasure about it coming back (7).
25. Hat found in kitchen? (9).
26. Returner who sang of wanderings? (5).
27. The second favourites make a come-back, showing their paces (5).
28. Wrongly resign and get a welcome (9).

DOWN

1. Colour which is forever in the book (5).
2. Pain is nothing in a greedy girl (9).
3. Put back a cover round the good food (7).
4. 'The dull —— Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon' (Milton) (5).
5. Grace hits out wildly but this was in Berlin (9)
6. Extra allowances spoil drinks (7).
7. Assume I stop being messed about (5).
8. Local people in tears about the team (9).
13. Some have legs and others powers of attraction (9).
14. Plaits as a gift to gravity (9).
16. Freeman is apparently an irritable chap (9).
18. Musical chairs? (7).
20. 'Fair is too foul an —— for thee' (Marlowe) (7).
22. Twice that (5).
23. A woman is put up as a riddle (5).
24. Leaves when the barber comes up (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1211



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Candidacy is limited to social scientists with a working knowledge of German, on the staff of UK universities, polytechnics, institutes of further education and independent research institutes. Applicants are expected to provide a detailed proposal and timetable for their visit to the FRG.

Further details and applications may be obtained from: David Kitson, SSRC, 1 Temple Avenue, London EC4Y 0BD. Please quote reference RV/NS.

Applicants who wish to commence their visit before 31 March 1978 must submit applications by 13 June 1977

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 93 No. 2406

Contents

550 **James Fenton:** Jonathan Aitken, At Home

551 **Mervyn Jones:** Free for All, and Why Not?

553 **Jeremy Bugler:** The Great Oil Blow-Out

554 **Raymond Wacks:** Privacy and the Press

555 **John Hatch:** Mr Manley's Experiment

556 **Household Faces 5:** Robert Robinson

557 **Christopher Hitchens:** Mourning Star

558 **Peter Wilby:** Death of the Sixth Form

559 **Crucifer:** London Diary

560 **Jonathan Sleigh:** Civil Service Selection

561 **Arthur Marshall:** Mother O' Mine

561 ***Roger Woddis:*** *Meeting of the Magi*

562 **Letters to the Editor**

Books & Arts

564 **E. J. Mishan:** Social Limits to Growth

565 **John Morgan:** Dylan Thomas

Other reviews by Fitzroy Maclean Eric Rhode, Malcolm Bradbury, Susannah Clapp

571 **Mark Kidel, Alan Blyth:** Festivals

577 **Benedict Nightingale:** Theatre

578 **John Coleman:** Films

578 **Ian Hamilton:** Television

579 **John Spurling:** Art

580 **David Harsent:** Tour

580 **Weekend Competition**

581 **Chess and Crossword**

Poems by C. J. Monckton, Edwin Brock, Molly Holden

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FOURTH HAROLD WALSBY MEMORIAL Lecture. Anthony D. Smith on 'Minorities and the Resurgence of Nationalism'. Conway Hall, Monday, 2 May at 8 p.m.

ADLERIAN SOCIETY: 'Solving Problems: Thinking and Deciding'. I. D. Shamah, Scientist and Philosopher. Tues. 3 May 7.30 p.m. Presbyterian Church Hall, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2. (Next to Midland Bank, Cambridge Circus). Visitors welcome 30p. (Students 10p).

TIBET SOCIETY OF UK celebrates 'Commemoration of the Lhasa Uprising'. Saturday 30 April, Chelsea Town Hall, SW3. 2-5 p.m. Programme includes: talks, Lama dancing, folk songs and films. Also, stalls, food and displays. Admission only 50p. For details tel. 930 1308.

'HUMANISM & THE ALEXANDER principle', Talk by John Leeson, London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, W8. Sunday 1 May 7.30 p.m. Admission 30p.

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